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RURAL COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION

BY

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PREFACE

This study is an attempt to arrive at the proper local unit which lends itself to comprehensive community organization. It is maintained throughout the investigation that this unit should have a sufficient area of territory within which the farm population may have enough cohesion to work together, enough volume of numbers and of wealth for the creation of necessary institutions, and sufficient concentration within the unit to allow for the distribution of needed public utilities.

There are many organizations and agencies, today, looking for this proper unit. They realize that basic, fundamental rural organization plans can be formulated only upon that unit which has all the qualifications necessary to give social and economic success. National and state aspects, whether political, economic, or social, are of secondary importance to the definition of this unit. The goal of this investigation, therefore, is the determination of the local unit of rural organization, together with the forces to be organized and co-ordinated within the unit.

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It is felt by the writer that a study of this sort should be prosecuted in full recognition of the changing psychology of the farmer; that, unless this phenomenon is kept in mind, the reasons for casting off the old methods and forms and taking on new ones will not become fully evident. He is convinced that, heretofore, not enough thought has been given to the determining factors underlying the farmers' reactions. The proper local unit must be conceived of in relation to the fundamental socio-economic conditions of the country and of country life.

The writer wishes to acknowledge his obligations to Dr. Charles J. Galpin, his former instructor at the University of Wisconsin and now of the United States Department of Agriculture. It was under Dr. Galpin's direction that this work was undertaken; great credit is due him for his kindly suggestions and encouragement.

Dr. E. C. Branson, of the department of rural social science of the University of North Carolina, has been a constant source of help in the studies relating to the North Carolina Incorporation Plan and features of the country community in various southern states.

President Kenyon L. Butterfield and Professor John Phelan, both of the Massachusetts Agricultural College, have aided very materially in my getting into touch with some of the most helpful sources of information. Superintendent O. H. Greist, of Randolph County, Indiana, and Superintendent C. E. Shutt, of Marshall County, Iowa, have been very kind and helpful in assisting the writer while he was in their counties.

County Agricultural Agent A. L. Hodgson, formerly of Randolph County, Indiana, and now of Carroll County, Indiana, gave valuable assistance in the social study of Randolph County.

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CHAPTER I

THE NEED OF A RURAL POLICY

In a discussion of rural organization and allied fields the lack of a central guiding policy becomes evident. The ideal of a common goal toward which all the various and numerous agencies in rural work are striving has not been formulated.

Excellent as has been most of our rural investigation and teaching, even to profound achievement in some fields, there has been without doubt a great loss in effectiveness, in duplication, in useless controversy, in the lack of correlation, and in an understanding of fundamental rural psychology and rural relations. Principles once discovered do not need to be discovered again and again; we find, however, that there has been great waste in human and financial resources in that way. Proof of this is seen in the numerous duplicate investigations and researches, accounts of which are published by the various state agricultural colleges and experiment stations and the United States Department of Agriculture, dealing with

once proved, clear-cut, and definite principles. A further proof of the lack of a policy is seen in the numerous plans of our extension divisions in trying to reckon with the farmer on the land. They know they are trying to help him, but just how, and why, and for what, there is no general agreement.

A true policy must have a certain completeness about it. It can be rather definitely expressed and understood. It must be widely and generally accepted; it directs efforts and governs activities. Government, farmers' associations, and individuals will join in a common effort for one large end, intelligently, earnestly, co-operatively. This sort of policy we do not have in America today.[1]

A true policy will recognize the inseparable interrelations existing between the social and the economic activities of farm life and not divorce them. It will seek to correlate all agencies so that the development of these activities will advance in proper degree and in proper relation to one another. Any other ideal must surely result in dwarfed and retarded development. The economic and the social are inseparably bound up in the farmer's life; in his thoughts and plans and activities he never clearly separates the one from the other. This

[1] Kenyon L. Butterfield, *The Farmer and the New Day*, p. 85. (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1919.)

trait of rural psychology must be kept always in mind in the formulation and execution of any policy.

If we should attempt to designate a rural policy of the pas we might say there has been more or less conscious effort in the nation at large to develop along the following lines:

1. To increase agricultural production, chiefly by opening for agricultural use as much land as possible and settling it as rapidly as possible; but also by education, exhortation, expert advice and government subsidies in special instances;

2. To encourage one-family farms owned by those who till them;

3. To increase as much as possible our exports of agricultural products, both new and manufactured.[1]

As we look back upon our history, we find in this policy many things calling for commendation, and many calling for regret. This sort of ideal helped us subdue a wild, raw country, develop and bring it to a foremost place among the nations. It helped us rear upon this land the most virile and aggressive people, in the main, the world has ever seen. It has implanted strongly in the heart and mind of the American farmer the ideal of landownership and all the strength of character and conservatism that go with it.

[1] *Ibid.*

On the other hand, this sort of policy has revealed glaring weaknesses in its scope and aims. It has given us no definite land policy with proper plans for land settlement according to differences in productiveness of soil and human abilities. It offered no plans or policy relating to soil conservation, credit facilities, for community development, marketing and distribution of farm products. There are no plans for the co-ordination of the institutions of the farmers' local unit with those of the larger unit, such as county, state, and nation. There are no plans for co-operation between town and country. Probably most fundamental of all, there is no policy relative to the development of local institutions of the farmer, no definition of their natural sphere, and no endeavor to assist him in and through their medium.

As a consequence of these latter failures there have been countless attempts to connect the farmers in educational, co-operative, religious, and political ways with general advancements in the world at large. We are now just beginning to locate our troubles. A policy framed upon an understanding of the farmer's psychology, upon a knowledge of his local

community and of his institutions, would have prevented very many conflicting aims, much resultless effort, and much misunderstanding of the conservatism of the farmer.

A rural policy we should have which is broader than a mere statement of plans. It must be conceived in the light of the mistakes of the past, the developments of the present, and the needs of the future. A comprehensive rural policy will not consider agriculture and country life narrowly, as something to be fostered and aided for its own sake, but as a vital part of a great society, as one of the departments of American life the development and growth of which must, for the good of all, be co-ordinated and related to every other department.

In this policy, rural organization will play a very large part. The day of the individualist farmer has passed. Farmers must co-operate as never before; co-operation takes its highest form through organization. Effective organization must include persons of common interests, common aims, and definiteness of purpose. Conscientious, searching, painstaking effort must be made to locate the areas of natural, comprehensive rural communities, and to apply

the tenets of a policy upon such a basis, fitting all teaching, all plans and purposes to the particular local environment, both physical and human.

> The ultimate need of the open country is the development of community effort and of social resources. . . . . There is a general lack of wholesome societies that are organized on a social basis. . . . . There is need of the greatest diversity in country life affairs, but there is equal need of a social cohesion operating among all these affairs and tying them all together.[1]

There must be a definition of aims, a set of principles, a proper representation of the separate forces working in the rural field. A program should be arranged reaching clearly from the highest and most complex rural governmental and state institution to the farmer on the land. This program will set the goals for the different fields of endeavor; it will outline methods of procedure. Selected representatives from all the different fields of work should help in framing this program. In such a way it will be based upon actual needs and definite information. Proper machinery must be erected for vitalizing the program, for its administration and perpetuation.

[1] *Report of the Commission on Country Life*, p. 107. (New York: Sturgis and Walton Company, 1911.)

In the words of Professor E. L. Morgan, we find stated the following elements of a correct conception of a rural policy:

> . . . . The goal in country life organizations is such an understanding and relationship of persons, forces and agencies in a given area, whether community, county, state or nation, as accomplishes for that unit the most systematic and progressive correlation of those forces and agencies that make for the sound development of a satisfying life for rural people, and for the adjustment of their highest welfare to the common good.[1]

Important contributions to the framing of a rural policy have been made by some of our leading rural thinkers of the day. Comprehensive state policies have been worked out in certain fields, which, within themselves, are near models for the framing of a broader and all-inclusive policy. As an illustration the writer would refer to the "Illinois System of Permanent Agriculture," conceived of and developed by the late Dr. Cyril G. Hopkins, of the University of Illinois. Here is a true policy with respect to the maintenance of soil fertility, a policy with a definite goal, e.g., a permanent, satisfying, remunerative agriculture;

[1] *Proceedings, First National Country Life Conference, Baltimore*, p. 138. (Ithaca, N.Y.: National Country Life Association, 1919.)

a policy with a specific program, namely, the education of all the people connected with the land to the needs of soil conservation and the ways and means of securing the same. Here is a policy, at the base an economic conception, but which recognizes that a people cannot progress, cannot build worthy institutions, cannot even hold their own status with ever declining soil fertility. The program of this policy involves the taking of the most complete inventory of the stock of fertility in soils ever undertaken by any institution. In carrying out this inventory, the soils of every nook and corner of the state of Illinois are mapped and shown in colors according to types. An analysis of the store of fertility in areas as small as 10 acres in extent is made, and accompanies the map relating to the soils of any particular county. Thousands of samples of soil of every type and class in the state are carefully analyzed by trained chemists. Specific, definite recommendations for the building up and maintaining of the fertility of all soils are made, these being based upon the results of the analyses and the results of extensive and numerous field experiments gathered from local experiment stations scat-

tered throughout the state upon every important soil type. In this policy a decided stand is taken against the recommendation of the ordinary mixed, complete fertilizers as a means of soil improvement, against wasteful soil-management practices, and against useless expensive methods of soil enrichment.

Definite machinery is set up for carrying out this policy. Advisory committees of actual, wide-awake farmers constitute the guiding forces in directing the policy. A force of trained soil surveyors, soil chemists, and experiment-station men constitute a scientific body for gathering and elaborating facts. Bulletins, lectures, colored county-soil maps, short courses, field demonstrations, and personal assistance, all form the means of disseminating the information.

This soil policy is given here at some length and detail in order to illustrate more completely what is meant by a policy, and that some hints might be dropped as to the fitness of a real rural policy which seeks to correlate all agencies and unite them in the attainment of definite rural life-ends.

President Kenyon L. Butterfield, of the Massachusetts Agricultural College, has out-

lined for us the elements of a true policy. He groups his discussion under four main heads, as follows:

1. A body of principles. It is shown here that we must adopt certain principles as a nation relative to exporting or importing a part or a greater part of our food; whether we should work for family-sized farms or large holdings with tenants; whether each section of the country should be designated a zone for the production of certain fitting crops and animals; whether we wish to encourage the further extension of our system of distribution of food products or supplement it with government regulation or management, or ownership of the machinery of food distribution. We should establish principles relative to protection and insurance against drouth, hail, flood, tornado, insect pests, and diseases. We should take certain stands as to whether our educational system should be broad enough to reach every worker on the land and include economic and social problems, or whether it should be made wholly technical.

2. There should be a program based upon adequate knowledge, definite purposes, and effective methods.

3. There should be machinery involving proper institutions, a proper division of labor, and constructive co-operation.

4. General needs such as allowing for a proper adjustment between policies and programs, the utilization of the laws of progress, a proper discussion of the issues involved, and a discovery and training of leaders to carry out the policy; and, finally, President Butterfield emphasizes that due recognition must be given to the nation as a whole in any rural policy because of the fact that in a country like ours the success of any rural policy must depend upon the support of the whole people.[1]

In conclusion, we may say that no scheme of rural organization can work fully and completely without its proper articulation with each and every other force working in the rural field from the community outward to state and nation. The proper balancing and adjustment of forces and agencies will come through a clean-cut, definite policy. This chapter aims merely to point out in a general way the most outstanding reasons for a rural policy. For a proper treatment of the subject a treatise would be more appropriate; such a treatment awaits the skill and training of one very specially qualified.

[1] Kenyon L. Butterfield, *op. cit.*, pp. 95–99.

CHAPTER II

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF A CHANGING RURAL PSYCHOLOGY

An investigation of the sort attempted here would not have its proper setting, and could not show the relationships of one form of organization to another and to the rural population as a whole, without first making a constructive analysis of the farmer's attitude of mind toward the old and the new in country life. That his psychology is undergoing a change there can be little doubt. That this change is reflecting itself in his mode of living, in his economic and social life, and in his institutions, is of much significance to the student of rural life.

The early type of farmer in America was an extreme individualist. This should be stated without reproach. Under the conditions of the times, and by force of circumstances beyond his control, he could not very well have been otherwise. It was this mental characteristic which gave him needed self-reliance, indomitable perseverance, and a satisfaction with his

lot, all of which were so necessary for the huge task of settling this country on the plans laid out by our American forefathers.

With farm homes located at distances varying from rods to miles, with poor roads or none at all, no telephones, few conveniences of life as we know of them today, the typical American farmer soon learned to think of and interpret things in terms of his own individuality. This sort of psychology developed a resultant set of individualistic institutions, namely, the church, the district school, and the country store, all of which have served their day and age well. The farm home was also an expression of this individualism. Set in the midst of the toil and labors of the farmer, it partook of every activity of his isolated life. The whole fabric of farm-home life was intensified, intimately woven into the business of the farmer, and highly individualized.

Dr. Warren H. Wilson, in his admirable book, *The Evolution of the Country Community*, brings out the foregoing points. He says:

> . . . . The land farmer expected to live in his group. Secure in his own acres and believing himself "as good as anybody," he relied for his son and daughter not upon trained skill, but upon native abilities, sterling character,

independence and industry. Of all these the household, not the school, is the source.[1]

Until recent years the farmer has not been brought into economic and social contact with the world in matters of the deepest concern to his success. He did not feel the need of co-operating with outsiders in establishing business relationships. His market was local and required little attention on his part; co-operative enterprises were of the simplest kind, legislation he left to the lawyers, most of his farm work he performed by himself with the aid of his family, the townsman meant little more to him than a necessary evil to be watched with the closest scrutiny. His daily and seasonal round of duties, civic, social, economic and religious, brought him very little into relationships to others where his conduct, his ability to please, and his agreeableness and personality meant success or failure to his enterprise. Until recent years the American farmer has been a free lance. Professor C. J. Galpin says of him:

. . . . Organizing the duties of his land management without supervision, in general accordance with tradition and custom, the farmer, we have observed, is his own boss.

[1] Warren H. Wilson, *The Evolution of the Country Community*, p. 24. (Boston, Mass.: The Pilgrim Press, 1912.)

Not only is he in great measure a craftsman, but a craftsman exempt from superior authority and without the influence of competitors. This constant dependence upon his own judgment has wrought out the habit of self reliance. Moreover, his solitary mode of working in the fields, out in the environing spaces of silence, unbroken by the click of other human wills, where the tick, tick, tick of his own mental machinery is registering his own private judgments, has re-enforced the habit of self reliance. He works upon the soil; he works towards a product which is shaping up according to the will of God; he works under no man made specifications or man made patterns; he works under no pressure to please the human whim of the ultimate user of his product.[1]

This sketch of influences and of their effect upon the farmer will serve as a basis upon which to develop the importance of the significant changes creeping into the rural life of today, and to show the reasons for their slow but steady advance. In considering rural organization plans and, especially, the determination of the unit of population upon which to build plans, a knowledge of the psychology of farm folks is absolutely essential. Changes in attitudes are remarkably different in different parts of the country. Plans, therefore, must be made to fit conditions. Many of the schemes of the past have fallen to pieces because they

[1] Charles J. Galpin, *Rural Life*, pp. 43–44. (New York: The Century Company, 1918.)

were cut to a pattern and not to measure. Much ill-adapted work of county agents, extension bureaus, state and national agencies is due to the projection of plans upon a basis not cognizant of the will of the farmer and his local group.

The increasing commercialization of agriculture, bringing the farmer into economic and social relations with men of various business groups, has been a dominant force in stimulating him to a more cosmopolitan attitude of mind. With the concentration of industries and the building up of cities, agriculture has passed from a self-sufficing occupation to one dependent upon the outside world. This has brought about a great development and extension of markets in food products and has thereby drawn the farmer into varied relationships. He finds it necessary now to look beyond his farm and neighborhood, to study the big question of supply and demand, to interpret economic changes, and to conduct his farming in accordance with the new demands. With the increased specialization in agriculture and the development of sale by grades, classes, and standards, the farmer is being thrown more and more into contact with strong competitive

forces. By the operation of the law of the survival of the fittest, the farmer is forced out of his individualistic ways in such markets. As one illustration taken from among many, we find live-stock breeders nowadays very responsive to the increasing exactions of demand.

The telephone and rural mail delivery have done much to break down rural individualism; these are necessary adjuncts to the enlarging business relations of the farmer. The automobile and good roads have enlarged his neighborhood and community, brought him more into town, and, to a very great extent, have taken him out of his seclusion. The increasing use of machinery upon the farm has helped to free the farmer's mind for larger and broader questions than heretofore occupied it during his working hours. The deadening drudgery of hard work is being more and more replaced by complicated machines, which require greater skill and mental activity. The reflex of all this is more reserve power and alertness for associative activities.

President Kenyon L. Butterfield says:

> All farmers may be divided into three classes. There is the "old" farmer, there is the "new" farmer, and there is the "moss-back." The old farmer represents the ancient

régime. The new farmer is the modern business agriculturist. The moss-back is a medieval survival. The old farmer was in his day a new farmer; he was "up with the times" as the times then were. The new farmer is merely the worthy son of a noble sire; he is the modern embodiment of the old farmer's progressiveness. . . . . The new farmer has his largest conquests yet to make. But he has put his faith in the strong arm of science; he has at his hand the commercial mechanism of a world of business. He believes he will win because he is in league with the ongoing forces of civilization.[1]

Scientific agriculture and its leaders of vision have taught a new concept of human relations to the farmer. A son or a daughter returning from an agricultural college has exercised untold influence in the rôle of a changing psychology. Co-operative enterprises in road-building, in the ownership of expensive machinery, in breeding associations have had unlimited value in teaching the farmer how to rub shoulders and get along with the other fellow. Consolidation of schools, federation of churches, building and maintaining community centers have cut wider and deeper into the old individualistic state. The cultivation of the farmer by the townsman through chambers of commerce, community festivals, fairs, boys' and girls'

[1] Kenyon L. Butterfield, *Chapters in Rural Progress*, pp. 53–54. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1907.)

club prizes have all tended to break down suspicion and antagonism between townsman and farmer. At this point Professor Galpin[1] opens up a fertile vein of thought in showing that much of the former aloofness between townsman and countryman has been due to widely different standards of living. The farmer, who has a low standard of living compared with the city man, will tend to look with suspicion upon the latter, and as a consequence there is no common getting together. It is only as standards of living approach equalization that we get the co-operation between the two that rings true. One of the solutions, therefore, of this phase of the rural problem is a rising standard of living for the farmer where his present standard is too low.

Dr. Paul L. Vogt states:

> The newspaper and the agricultural journal, together with the development of free public library systems, are tending toward a unity in mental content in the rural and the urban community. As rural reading matter becomes more abundant, the differences in types of thought between town and country will become less marked.[2]

[1] Charles J. Galpin, *The Village in Relation to the Surrounding Country*. A paper read before a conference on the village and the town school of the National Education Association, Cleveland, Ohio, February 26, 1920.

[2] Paul L. Vogt, *Introduction to Rural Sociology*, p. 194. (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1917.)

In this connection it might be well to state that the spread of reading-matter among the farmers is of undoubted value and should become more universal. At the same time, however, we must not lose sight of the fact that many a city man is densely ignorant of the farmer and his true method of life, and that educative agencies are quite as necessary for him in order to bring about a proper adjustment between the two, resting upon a thorough understanding and appreciation of each for the other's business and mode of life.

The discussion of the factors playing a part in shaping a new psychology for the farmer does not lead to the conclusion that the farmer, under the full influence of the new system, will have a city man's psychology, quite the contrary. It simply means that we are taking cognizance of the changing psychology of the farmer as a correct basis upon which to construct organization plans. It shall be our endeavor to show the fitness or unfitness of different schemes of rural organization according to this new order.

CHAPTER III

THE TRADE AREA

As a unit of rural organization the rural trade area of villages, towns, and cities offers an interesting field of investigation. That every trading-center has a land basis has long been known, but the significance and importance of the relationship of this land basis to the center has not until recent years been made a subject of study and thoughtful planning. This trade area, together with its center, has been proposed by some writers as an ideal unit for rural organization. It is felt that here we find the most complete life of the farmer as well as of the townsman; that all the institutions of each are at hand. Before evaluating this plan and showing its limitations, it may be well first to analyze the structure of a trade area and study the reasons for its existence.

About every village, town, or city containing a variety of institutions, one might, by careful survey, outline and define areas of patronage extending into the country at varying distances; the distance and direction depending upon the proximity of other trading-centers, conditions

of roads, presence or absence of natural barriers, the push, business ingenuity, and salesmanship of the trade center, and other like influences. One could in this manner discover banking zones, newspaper zones, dry-goods and grocery zones, high-school zones, library zones. One would find, in the main, the inner areas of these zones remaining quite stable and the outer areas fluctuating more or less. Along the outer areas there may also be found neutral areas where the farmers may go to one trade center for one line of goods and to another trade center for a different line. Such areas as these may be of considerable dimensions, depending upon the strategic location of the farmers as to trading-centers almost equally available. One can say that as a rule, however, around every trading-center of appreciable size can be found a compact definite group of farmers who do the great bulk of their trading at the center; who, because of these relations, feel toward that center a more or less common allegiance. The merchants and tradesmen of the center also recognize this land basis, court this trade (even though in all too many cases with an idea of exploitation), depend upon it, and seek to keep it satisfied.

In theory, this population, bound together in the first instance by ties and obligations of business relations, constitutes an ideal area as to population, cohesion, variety of interest, variety of institutions, and business contacts upon which to build the superstructure of rural organization. In theory, the mingling of townsman and farmer in trade relations furnishes the avenue for the opening up of more definite economic and social relations, for the development of a concrete community consciousness. In theory, the farmer will recognize his obligations to the center and seek to fulfil them by co-operative effort, good will, and loyalty, and the townsman will recognize his dependence upon the farmer, wipe out in his own mind the idea of town or city limits, and add in its place a conception of the community, of the oneness of aims of farmer and townsman. He will include the farmer in public undertakings and institutions as an equal partner with himself.

Now there is no question but that such a program as the foregoing will redound in much good to all. That it is an ideal toward which town and country should work should be taken for granted without argument. No good can come out of warfare between town and country,

the one needs the other, the one helps to build the other, and they should work together in harmony and co-operation. But that the trade area is not a unit of general and inclusive organization covering every square mile of territory in an effective way becomes evident upon closer study and analysis. There are localities so far removed from a trade center that trading alone is the only function that can reasonably be performed at the center. Trading relations will draw the farmers at stated periods to the center, but their social and religious and educational attachments will not undergo such a strain from distance. Also, the trade area in many cases will be found to include too many of too diverse interests for them to become interested in one another; a certain diversity there should be. A group drawn together in the main because of trading at a center often does not hold in common enough vital interests touching deeply the lives of all alike to feel and act concertedly. The family to the north of town will only in rare cases come intimately to know the family to the south of town. The purely informal and casual meetings at the center are not enough to draw people together in the conduct of serious business.

A study of a rather comprehensive trade area has been made in the hope of throwing light upon this problem by means of concrete illustration.[1] Sullivan, Sullivan County, Indiana, has been taken as a typical rural county-seat town. It lies in the geographical center of a good agricultural county in west-central southern Indiana. Sullivan County stands high among the counties of southern Indiana in the production of corn, hogs, poultry, cattle, wheat, hay, and oats. The trade area of Sullivan represents the county well in all these products.

Sullivan, according to the 1910 census, had a population of 4,115; it stands very near the 5,000 mark now. There are very few foreign-born persons in the city or in the trade area; racial differences and class differences are of the smallest significance here. In the main, Sullivan is a good county seat, farmers' town, and is dependent essentially upon the land basis round about it. There is one small automobile factory recently established, which, at present, employs only a few workmen. There is a small canning factory, which finds its supplies within

[1] This study is based upon the author's three years' service as county agricultural agent in Sullivan County.

the trade area; it cans tomatoes chiefly, one of the minor crops of the area. There are two farmers' coal mines within the trade area, but the city handles considerable business of the Consolidated Coal Company which operates in the eastern half of the county. The electric current for the city and a few country homes is furnished by the interurban company with headquarters at Terre Haute, 26 miles north. Sullivan has its regular quota of professional men and merchants. It is not burdened with retired farmers, having only a fair scattering, many of whom are in small business concerns or still looking after their farms. There are six churches, three graded schools, and one high school in the city. There is also an excellent new county hospital of fifty beds. This is the only hospital in the county and is well patronized by town and country people. The high school is one of the best in the state, enrolling about 190 pupils; it is fairly well used by the farmer boys and girls. All the main streets of Sullivan are well paved, and the main roads leading out into the country and throughout the trade area are well graveled and improved.

The business men of Sullivan are a good, hustling group and take the lead in public

matters. They have in the past, through their Chamber of Commerce, aided, financially and morally, corn shows, poultry shows, live-stock exhibitions, and boys' and girls' club work. At the present time they have formed a community club, composed of town and farmer members, which has supplanted the Chamber of Commerce. This club has just completed arrangements for building a live-stock pavilion in Sullivan; this has been financed by selling shares to town and country people. It is to be used for agricultural meetings and for agricultural shows and exhibitions. The bankers quite generally encourage the farmers' co-operation. At present, the National Bank is encouraging a pure-bred-calf club among the boys' and girls' clubs by giving to certain members who fulfil certain requirements pure-bred Hereford calves; nine calves were placed in the spring of 1920. The Peoples' State Bank has been following a similar plan with pig-club work during the past three years.

The farming land of the trade area is of good quality, although not the best in the county. The soil is a light gray, running into a dark gray silt loam of the lower Illinoisan Glaciation; it has all been rather heavily timbered. The

farms average about 140 acres in size, are, on the whole, well cultivated, but lacking in proper drainage in some areas. The farm homes are of a good, substantial type and usually convenient, but generally not modern. Tenancy is not a problem, ranging not more than from 28 to 30 per cent. The farmers are good, dependable folk, almost entirely of American stock. The farm family averages about five members. The density of population is somewhat greater in a section of the area to the east of Sullivan than it is in the remainder of the area. This is due to the fact that the farms here are smaller, although on the whole less productive. The rural population of the trade area is slightly under, in number, the population of the center. In a general way, the trade area extends outward from the center in the following distances: north, $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles; northeast, 8 miles; east, 5 miles; southeast, 7 miles; south, 5 miles; southwest, 8 miles; west, 5 miles; northwest, 8 miles.

With this setting and knowledge of the people before us, we may now go more definitely into their social and economic life. The farmers are fair traders in town; they buy as economically as possible, but too frequently they

are swayed or inclined to take an article because it is marked cheap, quite regardless of its quality. The farmer all too often feels he is in town to get all he can out of the town and to give as little as he can in return. He comes to town in great numbers on Saturdays, using a surprising array of automobiles nowadays, and buys his principal supplies of groceries and dry goods. During the remainder of the week he is seldom seen in the city; the ordinary course of events brings him to town primarily and principally for trade. On Saturdays, after trading is done, time is "killed" by loafing around the streets and the courthouse square. On Sundays, the six churches are found strikingly deficient in farm-family attendance. The farmer feels little affiliation with the town church; he has his own at the cross-roads a few miles out. The one theater of Sullivan seldom registers more than two dozen country folks in attendance at one time. The lodges, of which the Masonic, Woodmen, and Elks are the leaders, have done well in farmer membership, but in farmer attendance they are about on a par with the other institutions. There have been weak and spasmodic efforts at times for the ladies of town and country to get together

in home-economics clubs, but with no permanent success. The farmers' institutes held annually in Sullivan are the poorest in attendance of any in the county; an attendance of from thirty to fifty farmers is the rule for them. A business man seldom thinks it is his duty to attend any of the sessions. The corn, poultry, and live-stock shows are better patronized by the farmers, quite largely because of their county-wide nature and competitive character.

The farmers in the north part of the trade area do not know the farmers to the south of the center, nor do those to the east know those to the west. The wholly informal, irresponsible method of relationships at this trade center are not a sufficient basis to draw the people together into a unified group.

Thus it develops from this study that, under certain conditions, with a certain happy mixture of population relations, and a proper attitude of townsmen and farmers developed and maintained, the trade-area unit may, in peculiarly favored cases, be a good rural organization unit. But as a repeating socio-economic unit to be used to cover all the farm population it is not of sufficient universality.

CHAPTER IV

THE SMALL RURAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

The prominence held by the small rural school in the affairs of American farm life bids us look well into its structure for some clue to a fitting scheme for rural organization. Dr. Warren H. Wilson says:

> The farmers who out of a splendid idealism placed a schoolhouse at every cross-roads, on every hill-top and in every mountain valley, exact a tribute of praise from their successors. The unit of measurement of the school district, on which this system was based, was the day's journey of a child six years of age. Two miles must be its longest radius. The generation who spanned this continent with the measure of an infant's pace, mapped the land into districts, erected houses at the centers, and employed teachers as masters of learning for these little states, were men of statesman-like power. The country school is a nobler monument of the land farmer than anything else.[1] . . . .

The rural-school district was first organized in colonial New England out of the needs of the time. It served as a link connecting the isolated home with the outside world through educational, social, and oftentimes religious

[1] Warren H. Wilson, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

channels. The pioneers of the West planted it everywhere they went, until it has become one of the most widely disseminated of rural institutions.

The common size of the rural-school district is 4 square miles, the area varying according to topographical and local conditions. Impassable streams, hills, lakes, and the like, cause irregularity in size and shape. In a prairie country where there are no natural obstacles one finds them laid out with the regularity of spots on a checker board. The point to be brought out here is that the later development of the district seems to favor regularity and uniformity which militates against natural, voluntary community life.

The number of families within small rural districts will vary more than will the size of the district. The type of farming, determining the size of the farms, the character of the country, the degree of settlement, are all factors having an influence. One usually finds from a dozen or fifteen to thirty or forty families.

This little district with its population drawn together in the formal support of their one common institution constitutes America's smallest democracy. In this rural state, some-

times called a neighborhood, sometimes a community, we may find potent forces making for great strength and character. The intimacy with which the children of the various families come into contact and thereby draw the elders into closer relationships makes for understanding and co-operation. The closeness of the school to the lives of the people has a tendency to lift them along and to cement their interests. This has been proved time and again in a live, progressive district school. The close, personal supervision and instruction given the pupil throughout his attendance allows for most rapid progress and advancement. Thus we find that this, the smallest common unit of rural organization, has been a great force for good in its time and place. That it still has an influence in many sections of the country cannot be doubted. The writer in four years' work in extension activities has come into close relationship with many school districts in our central states which are real, effective socio-economic units. Boys' and girls' clubs, silo meetings, home-economics demonstrations, and better-farming meetings have all been staged successfully upon this basis. Some of the most effective work among farmers

in getting instruction to them and results out of it is done through such a homogeneous group.

There is little doubt that the small school district unit of country life will continue in some areas, especially of an isolated, thinly settled type, to be a real force and as effective a unit for such areas as can be found. A closer analysis of the common type of district made in the light of the needs of the present and in view of the more cosmopolitan character of the farmers' life will show glaring deficiencies.

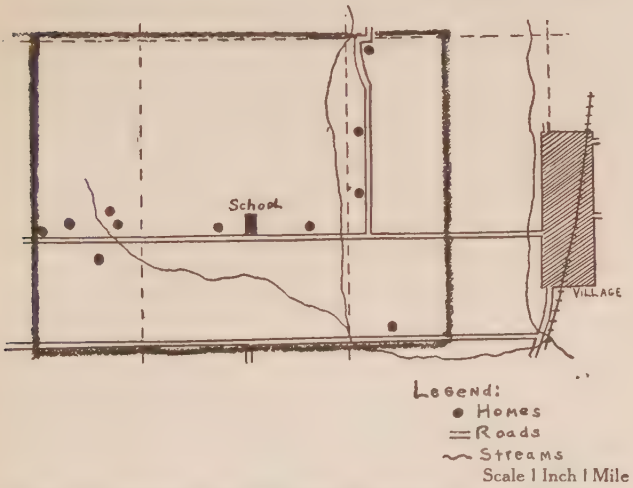
A careful study of the socio-economic features has been made of two rather typical small rural-school districts. One, the Fairview school district, of Sangamon County, Illinois, is representative of large areas of that section of the state. The other, the Big Springs district, of Sullivan County, Indiana, well represents most of the conditions of a more thickly settled section in central and southern Indiana.

1. FAIRVIEW DISTRICT[1]

Reference to the accompanying map shows this district to be 2 miles long and $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles wide, thus containing 3 square miles of territory. This district lies in the northwestern

[1] This district has long been the author's family residence.

part of Sangamon County in central Illinois. It is in a prairie country of rich black to brown silt-loam soil. There are no natural barriers in the area; only two small creeks pass through it. All of the land is in a high state of cultivation,



MAP 1.—Fairview School District, Sangamon County, Illinois

being devoted to general grain and live-stock raising. The farmers are prosperous and have their farms highly improved. The value of the land here in this area has been between $200 and $300 per acre for the past eight or ten years. The roads in the area are well-graded and -dragged dirt roads which,

nevertheless, become very bad at times during the winter and spring. The farms average 180 acres in size. There are eleven families within the district; the majority are Americans; two are tenants and two hired laborers. In 1900, when the school stood about its best, the population of the district was fifty-six persons; it has dwindled to thirty-five at present. This decrease is not due to enlargement or abandonment of farms, but to the fact that several large families have grown up and scattered, and to a change from large to small families in the tenant and hired group.

The Fairview school has always been one of smaller good schools of the county. While its attendance has fluctuated from about seven to thirty or more, it has always ranked high in educational and moral standards.

Now, when we come to consider the district as an organized rural unit sufficient for the needs of the farmers from a socio-economic standpoint, we find serious deficiencies. The people here feel themselves one in the support of the school, but, aside from that, there is no bond that holds them; a general community spirit does not exist. The school brings the young folks together and fosters a local interest in them

which extends to a slight degree to the parents, but which, on the whole, is so weak as to be of little value in rural organization. No adult gatherings of any sort take place at the school; no public lectures, farmers' meetings, and the like. In fact, very little neighborhood or community life of any sort is exhibited within the district. These things may be due in part to the fact that the trade village is $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles distant from the school, and that the farmers prefer to find their community life within the larger circle.

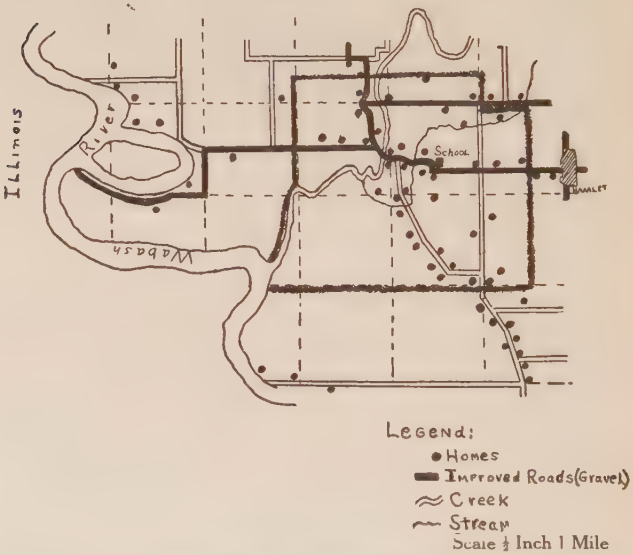
It becomes plainly evident in this study that there is something lacking to make the school district an effective unit. The most serious deficiency in this case is a lack of sufficient area and population to give variety of interests and of social contacts; a lack of institutions numerous enough to satisfy all the needs of the people; such as these can seldom be found in the ordinary rural-school district.

2. BIG SPRINGS SCHOOL DISTRICT[1]

The map on page 38 shows this district to be larger and more populous than the

[1] The facts were gathered from first-hand information and careful survey.

Fairview district. It embraces about 5 square miles of territory and has a present population of about 110 persons. Nearly 2 square miles of this district lie in the Wabash River bottoms,



MAP 2.—Big Springs School District, Sullivan County, Indiana

which are farmed from homes situated along the higher land just out of the bottom. This condition gives a somewhat closer settlement around and near a center than is often found in the country. Big Springs district is in the western part of Sullivan County, Indiana, a

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south-central Indiana county, bordering on the Wabash River on the west. This is a good agricultural section, the soil varying from a deep, rich, black silt and clay loam in the bottoms to a sandy and yellow clayey upland in the rolling areas. The upland is not rugged in nature, but varies from gently undulating to small broken areas along streams. Communication facilities are excellent throughout the area, as good gravel roads are found and the telephone is in general use. The common-sized farm is about 140 acres. There are two large landholders in the district who each have over 1,000 acres; this gives a somewhat greater number of tenants than is common. The chief agricultural productions are corn, wheat, oats, hay, pure-bred cattle, and hogs. This is one of the best farming sections of the county, and the landowners, as well as the tenants, show their success. Their homes are well improved, the farms well kept, and their families are being well educated. Some of the hired laborers and a few tenants, however, are being poorly provided for, a condition sometimes hard to explain.

The school and the district have always been considered one of the best in the county.

The people here have always leagued together upon a district basis better than have those in the Fairview district. There are now forty-three families living within the district, fourteen of whom are families of hired laborers, five tenant families, and twenty-four are families of owners. In 1900, when the school was flourishing, there was a population of one hundred and seventy-five persons in the area. The diminution from one hundred and seventy-five in 1900 to about one hundred and ten at the present time is due to the phenomenon seen in the case of the Fairview district, namely, smaller families and not larger farms or farm abandonment.

Naturally we may be led to conclude that in this district we have a better rural organization unit than in the case of the one first discussed, and so we have, on the whole. There has been more neighborhood and community life and more co-operation. The school, however, has been used very little more as a focus for the socio-economic relations of the adults; no farmers' meetings have been held in it. The people themselves within the district have not felt the incentive of organized life, and it was not until 1907, when this district consolidated with several others, at a small

hamlet one mile away, that the people developed a real community spirit, based upon the enlarged community. In the former case we had more of the neighborhood group, not feeling in any way the formality of a concrete and organized life.

In these two studies we have covered two representative examples of small, rural school district units. Each represents its particular section of the country very well. In neither case have we found the proper combination of factors to give success in rural organization plans. The small school unit is too small. It does not embrace a sufficient land area to give us the size of population, together with proper cohesion and density, to allow for sufficient variety in human interests and contacts. The chances for obtaining real leaders in such a small area are much reduced. The social contacts are too limited in number and too much of the same sort to arouse much individual initiative.

The farmer of today, with his good roads, automobile, and telephone, demands a variety of interests and contacts; his organized life must be constructed upon a broader basis than the district-school neighborhood.

Professor Galpin says: ". . . . All the farmers' psychologic handicaps, concentrated and symbolized in the little school itself, are perpetuated apparently by the smallness of the school."[1]

[1] Charles J. Galpin, *Rural Life*, p. 125.

CHAPTER V

THE RURAL COMMUNITY VARIOUSLY CONSIDERED

I. THE RURAL PARISH

Recognizing the undoubted relation of the rural church to the life and welfare of a country community, the rural parish will here be considered as a possible unit of rural organization.

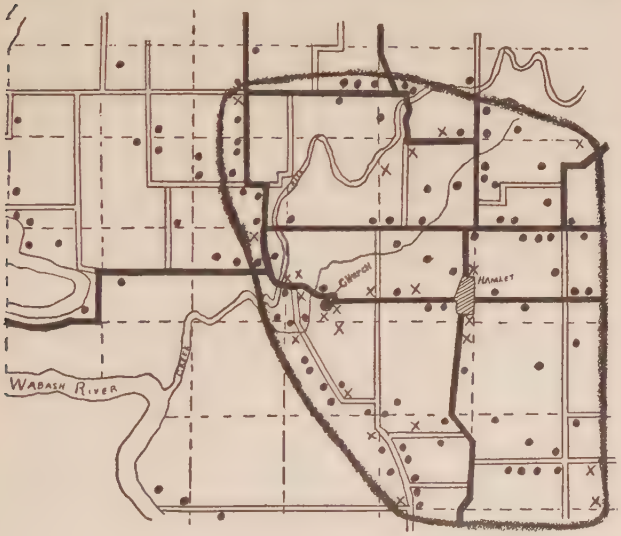
The parish is found to vary greatly in size, shape, and compactness, depending upon the number of the prevailing denominations and the strength of each. Parishes may be found overlapping one another for considerable distances, and, again, some rural districts may be found outside the realm of any parish.

A personal study has been made of the Big Springs parish, Sullivan County, Indiana. For a description of the character of the country, type of farming, character of the inhabitants, and like factors, the reader is referred to the discussion of the same in chapter iv, in connection with the Big Springs school district. The parish is somewhat larger than the district,

but the general physical and human factors are practically the same.

The denomination of the Big Springs church is called "The New Light Christian." The church house is a modest, but convenient, frame structure capable of seating two hundred and fifty persons. It is centrally located relative to the area served and is easily accessible over well-improved roads. The parish can be rated as high as any in the county. The parishioners are loyal supporters of their church and hold it high in their thoughts and lives. The church membership is fifty persons, all of whom are quite faithful in service attendance and church support. Sunday school is very regularly attended; it has a membership of fifty-five and meets every Sunday. Preaching services are held once a month by a non-resident pastor. There is a ladies' aid society of twenty members, which meets regularly every week at one of the homes in the parish. This society is a live organization and functions continuously. The social activities of the parish are regular and rather varied. On a certain day each October, an annual home-coming is staged at the church. This is the biggest event of the year, and the average attendance for the

past four years has been about two hundred persons. All persons who have ever been Big Springs people are welcome guests at this



MAP 3.—Big Springs Parish, Sullivan County, Indiana

home-coming. Services are held and the audience is addressed by some speaker of note. A big picnic dinner also features the day. The

Sunday school holds two picnics a year: one in the spring and the other in the fall of the year. These picnics usually occur at some interesting point outside the area. Rather elaborate children's exercises are held every June. Every Easter the Sunday school holds an egg roast.

On the whole, this parish is above the average in community spirit and progressiveness. It will be observed, however, by studying the map on page 45 that there are embraced within the limits of the parish many homes which are not functioning, which are not receiving the benefits of this co-operation. For one reason or another, they are not drawn into the organization. Some owe allegiance to other parishes, which cross lines with the Big Springs parish. Many of these homes, however, do not feel the necessary spur to align themselves with an informal church organization, but a more universal organization, including a varied group of activities, economic as well as social in character, would catch them. At this point a school district is a more effective unit than a parish, because all residents of a school district, by virtue of their residence, are a part of the district and contribute to its support.

As valuable as may be a parish unit, its structure may possess inherent weaknesses which render it unsatisfactory as a unit of general application. One of these is the same as that charged against the small rural school district, namely, it is not sufficiently comprehensive in size of actual membership. It oftentimes embraces considerable territory, in which case the membership will lack compactness and cohesion. The crossing and recrossing of parish lines gives a disgression of aims and interests which does not lend itself well to solidarity of community plans. The parish does not cover every square mile of rural territory and is, therefore, not of universal application.

2. THE TOWNSHIP UNIT

In the west-central states the geographical or congressional township, which is generally 6 miles square, is usually taken as the civil township. In some cases, however, the latter may include one and parts of several geographical or congressional townships. In this discussion, we shall refer entirely to the civil township. On the whole, the boundaries of this area are straight lines and have no reference whatever to social features.

It has been proposed by some students of rural life to use the civil township as a basis for rural-organization plans. The National Grange has copied this plan as have also the Farm Burèau associations. In both of these organizations evidences are apparent that this base is artificially created; such a community does not always show effective co-operation. One side of a township often will pull in one way while another part is pulling in an opposite direction. Sometimes a natural barrier, like a large river or lake, separates the township into two or more distinct communities.

A careful social survey of a rural township in Indiana, made by the author and submitted as a Master's thesis in the University of Wisconsin, revealed the fact that portions of that township along the northern, eastern, and southern boundaries did not maintain any social and but little economic relations with the main portion of the township. It also was found that an adjacent, irregular area out of another township had both social and economic relations with the main group of the first township.

Professor Fairlie, in *Local Government in Counties, Towns and Villages*, shows that the

"artificial form of the township in the Middle West has been of no little influence."[1] He further states concerning this matter:

. . . . Certainly in these states the township often lacks the social unity of the New England town. A village may develop in one corner of a township, and become the local market for two or three adjacent townships, while the distant farmers of its own township trade in the village of another. In other cases, a village may grow up across a township line, and the political line of demarcation must be followed, although there is no separation of real interests between those who live on either side.[2]

Only in rare cases, where community boundary lines happen to coincide with civil township lines, will there be a truly effective socio-economic unit of farm population within the civil township. The boundaries of this legal unit, therefore, are of too great an artificiality, from the standpoint of social relations, to be of the most effective service in defining a proper rural unit.

3. NEW ENGLAND TOWNS

Professor Fairlie says:

New England towns, for the most part, are irregular in form and usually contain from twenty to forty square miles. In the northern part of Maine the rectangular

[1] John A. Fairlie, *Local Government in Counties, Towns and Villages*, p. 173. (New York: The Century Company, 1914.)

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 173–74.

survey into townships six miles square has been followed, but this is distinctly different from other parts of New England. Most of the towns are predominantly rural in character, but all have one or more "villages" where houses are more compactly built, and in many cases towns are at least semi-urban and some can be classed as small urban communities.[1]

Probably no unit of rural life has been of greater prominence in the life of the nation than the rural New England town with its open forum and democratic form of government. Here is where the principles of liberty and free speech have held forth in all their power and influence.

For New England conditions, the town seems to furnish the proper clue to rural-organization plans. President Butterfield, of the Massachusetts Agricultural College, says:

> In this work of community mobilization, Massachusetts, in common with the other New England states, has a distinct advantage in possessing the town system of government. The town as a rule is a natural community. Outside of New England, community areas often have to be arbitrarily defined by some agreement.[2]

[1] John A. Fairlie, *Local Government in Counties, Towns, and Villages*, p. 144.

[2] Kenyon L. Butterfield, in E. L. Morgan, *Mobilizing the Rural Community*, Massachusetts Agricultural College, Extension Bulletin No. 23, Introduction, p. 9. (Amherst, Mass.: Massachusetts Agricultural College, 1918.)

Professor Morgan shows that

in Massachusetts the township is the natural local unit. Things are done as a town. It is the form of local government. There may be a number of neighborhoods within a township [town] but in most cases their interests blend into the larger community interest. The person living in the most remote section of the town has as much interest in public affairs and is as much a part of them as those living at the center. This being true, the natural group unit for the larger interests is usually the town. In this bulletin the terms "community" and "town" are used interchangeably.[1]

The fact that many New England towns recognize their unity and make effective use of it in bringing about thorough organization with a policy and plans for their entire life as it touches all interests is further shown in Professor Morgan's bulletin. Among several reports of Massachusetts towns, given in this bulletin, the following report of Walpole Town will illustrate the range and scope of their organization:

The exchange of plans and projects between the large number of organizations in the town has been of very great value in avoiding over-lapping and stimulating co-operation.

A committee after working a year and a half with the assistance of a landscape architect reported a plan for the physical development of the town which was adopted at the town meeting.

[1] E. L. Morgan, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

Special attention has been given to boys' and girls' home garden work, the result being the interesting of a large number of children.

An agricultural development plan which included co-operation between farmers and manufacturers has resulted in an increased acreage of crops.

A public market was established which has brought the producer and consumer together to the advantage of both.

A committee reported a town finance plan which was adopted by the town at its regular town meeting.

A rural development plan was adopted which provided for the opening of some new roads, the closing of others and the care and maintenance of all.[1]

It becomes evident from this brief study of the rural New England town that, as a general proposition for New England conditions, the problem of the local rural unit seems to be solved; that the next step, where such is true, is the framing of policies and plans for constructive organization and unification of all agencies relating to rural affairs.

4. THE COUNTRY COMMUNITY OF THE SOUTH

In the southern states we find a great lack of plans for community life. There are no organized forms of any significance, as community life in the South is made up of almost purely country units apart from the

[1] E. L. Morgan, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

general trading-centers. The individuals of these country communities trade more or less in the trading-towns, but spend a great deal of their day at the crossroads stores. Their social activities are very little connected with the towns or villages. Professor Galpin in a discussion of this phase says:

> The infrequent wants from a low standard population—so infrequent that the crossroads store cannot afford the goods to supply them—will be satisfied at a larger trade center to which the people from a far wider area may come for such goods. In many farming regions on a low standard plane, the county-seat functions as the supply center for the infrequent or special demands of the farm population of the whole county.[1]

The fact that the South, as a general rule, possesses no unit of comprehensive size or of a true community significance is rather thoroughly brought out by Dr. E. C. Branson, of the rural social science department of the University of North Carolina. In a letter to the author, under date of June 8, 1920, he states, in part, as follows:

> In the country regions of the South there is rarely ever a social or economic group that could be fairly called a community. We have settlements and neighborhoods in

[1] Charles J. Galpin, *The Village in Relation to the Surrounding Country*, a paper read before a conference on the village and the town school of the National Education Association, Cleveland, Ohio, February 26, 1920.

abundance, but we have almost no country communities beyond the cross-roads aggregations or the scattered homes around the country church or the country school, or the score or two of dwellings around a railway station, or the factory villages, which, as a rule, in North Carolina, are country affairs—our mills for the most part being located outside our incorporated towns or cities.

Which is to say, the country civilization of the South is settled in solitary farmsteads, scattered—a few to the square mile—throughout vast wilderness spaces; fewer than eight families to the square mile in North Carolina, both races counted—fewer than four families per square mile in ten counties, and fewer than seventeen families per square mile in our most populous country county. And so it is for the most part throughout the entire South, from North Carolina to Texas.

Virginia has more country communities than North Carolina, and so of Tennessee and Kentucky—little half-awake, half-asleep, half-alive, half-dead communities. North Carolina has had an immense increase in small towns and villages since 1900. They are little trading centers, mill and factory centers, and railway stations. I estimate that at present about one-fourth of our entire population is gathered into sub-census-sized towns of this sort. Frequently they are not incorporated, and usually they have a feeble sense of common necessities and lack the impulse to organize for community expression, self-protection, self-rule and regulation.

That a movement for effectively organized rural life in the South may find a way to overcome many of the handicaps enumerated by Dr. Branson is suggested in the advent of the

consolidated school district unit. A thorough discussion of this unit as of general application will appear in a later chapter. Mention will be made here of an interesting southern example.

Five Points, Chambers County, Alabama, was a typical post-office village, common in the South, before any community spirit was developed through school consolidation. In March, 1916, through constructive local leadership, plans began to crystallize for new life. Five small school districts were consolidated at Five Points, and because of "the failure of the State Constitution to recognize a school district as a political or tax unit" were incorporated as a town.

> The incorporation covers a territory of sixteen square miles, embracing all or a part of each of five school districts, with a total population of 1,053 people. The specific purpose of effecting this incorporation was to give a consolidated school district an opportunity to vote bonds with which to construct a building, thereby placing the burden of financing the enterprise on the wealth of the new district.[1]

A full discussion of the complete change in the community life of these districts and the success of the organization plans is found in

[1] *Consolidation of Schools and Transportation of Pupils*, p. 65. Bulletin No. 56, Alabama Department of Education, Montgomery, Alabama.

the bulletin referred to above. The following quotations will be given here to show the trend of the movement:

The Five Point Community Association is an organization in which young and old alike are eligible to membership. It seeks neighborhood betterment along definite lines. It holds bi-weekly meetings at the school buildings on Friday nights for the discussion of plans of general interest, and to enlist the number of helpers needed in any determined undertaking.

The work is carried on under the committee system. The several committees and their duties[1] are as follows:

1. A Committee on Public Schools.
2. A Committee on Health and Community Sanitation.
3. A Committee on Literary, Musical and Social Culture.
4. A Committee on Agriculture and Home Economics.
5. A Committee on Finances.[2]

5. THE NORTH CAROLINA INCORPORATION PLAN

This plan, a copy of the law relating to which is here given,[3] is a conscious movement on the part of rural communities comprising whole school districts to find expression in a legalized manner. It is a significant movement and contains many possibilities.

[1] For duties, see the bulletin.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 70–71.

[3] See Appendix A.

Dr. Branson says it is a tardy recognition of Thomas Jefferson's wisdom. In a letter, under date of June 8, 1920, Dr. Branson says:

> Only six genuine communities have ever been organized under our community incorporation law, and these are organized on paper only. One or two of them have levied a local tax for schools, but nothing more so far as I can learn.

The chief criticism of this plan may be found, perhaps, in the fact that its application is restricted to the small area of a country-school district; that it follows the district boundaries as they have been either naturally or artificially laid out with regard or disregard to whole communities. Matters will be helped very little, on the whole, until there has been introduced into the plans sufficient flexibility for comprehensive community life, which allows for the free and unhampered self-determination of communities; previously established artificial lines should not be allowed to interfere. Provision should be made for setting them aside where they do not serve as boundaries of social and economic cleavage.

CHAPTER VI

THE CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Inasmuch as the idea of the consolidation of schools is spreading very rapidly into every state in the Union, it becomes evident at once that the community value of the consolidated school district is a subject demanding our closest attention. The connection between a district and the full and complete life of rural neighborhoods appears quite marked as a study of the district progresses. Much has been written, and is being written, extolling the virtues of the consolidated school from an educational and pedagogical standpoint, but information which develops the district as a unit of rural life is very limited.

In this chapter the results of a first-hand study of two sections of the country will be given. Randolph County, Indiana, and Marshall County, Iowa, have both been visited and studied closely relative to the community value of the consolidated school district.

1. RANDOLPH COUNTY, INDIANA

Randolph County is situated in east-central Indiana, bordering upon the Indiana-Ohio state line. It contains 460 square miles, is almost square in outline, and is a purely agricultural county. A system of finely improved highways of crushed rock, gravel, and concrete construction traverses the county thoroughly, and one seldom sees a dirt road in this county. The land is level to undulating in typography; almost every acre of it is tillable. The county is covered with well-improved farms. There are many up-to-date farm homes in the county; the general type of home is comfortable, neat, and well kept. The agriculture throughout the county is much the same in all sections and consists of general grain and live-stock raising. The soil varies from a dark brown or black silty clay loam to light gray silt loams. All the land is fairly well tilled and is, on the whole, productive. Randolph County, agriculturally, ranks as one of the better counties of Indiana.

The county is composed of twelve civil townships which range in area from 24 to 74 square miles. The assessed valuations of these townships range from $1,000,000 to $3,500,000.[1]

[1] Data obtained from *Report* of the county superintendent.

According to the figures for the Federal Census for 1920, the population of the townships ranges from 815 inhabitants in Green, a rural township, to 6,029 in White River, a township of 72 square miles, containing the city of Winchester, the county seat. In Table I will be found the latest Federal Census figures, giving, also, the returns for 1910 and 1900. A comparison of these figures reveals a slight decline in population, in both incorporated places and in rural areas, between the years 1910 and 1920. There is an 8.7 per cent decline for the county as a whole. There was a slight increase, 1.3 per cent, for the decade between 1900 and 1910. Of the total population for 1920, 11,846 live in incorporated places, and 14,638 live in the country. The smallest incorporated place recorded in this census is one of 256 inhabitants. Two townships, Green and Jackson, are entirely rural. Former County Superintendent of Schools, Lee Driver, stated in a recent address that the population of the county is at least 99 per cent American-born.

The rural homes throughout the county average about five to six persons per family; the farms average from 100 to 160 acres in size. There is a somewhat closer settlement of families

TABLE I

COMPARATIVE POPULATION STATISTICS OF RANDOLPH COUNTY, INDIANA*

Minor Civil Division	1920	1910	1900
Randolph County	26,484	29,013	28,653
Franklin Township, including Ridgeville town	1,675	1,987	1,867
Green Township	815	985	1,095
Greensfork Township	1,690	1,746	2,086
Jackson Township	1,116	1,205	1,323
Monroe Township, including Farmland and Parker City towns	2,414	2,669	2,792
Nettle Creek Township, including Bronson town and part of Modoc town	1,310	1,542	1,475
Stony Creek Township	940	1,114	1,116
Ward Township, including Saratoga town	1,608	1,875	1,835
Washington Township, including Lynn town	2,353	2,562	2,560
Wayne Township, including Union City	4,837	4,772	4,372
West River Township, including part of Modoc town	1,397	1,557	1,670
White River Township, including Winchester City	6,329	6,999	6,462
Incorporated Place	**1920**	**1910**	**1900**
Bronson town (Losantville post-office)	321	300	177
Farmland town	878	907	870
Lynn town	898	917	705
Modoc town	256	261	221
Parker City town	697	800	909
Ridgeville town	1,042	1,302	1,098
Saratoga town	327	410	.....
Union City†	3,406	3,209	2,716
Winchester City	4,021	4,266	3,705

* *Fourteenth Census: Preliminary Announcement of Population.* Subject to correction. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C.

† Joint population of Union City, Indiana, and Union City village, Ohio: 1920, 4,940; 1910, 4,804; 1900, 3,998.

in the northeastern and eastern portions of the county than in the southwestern and western. Five railroads and one interurban line serve the county thoroughly. Two small rivers cross it from east to west;[1] both are easily bridged.

With this introduction and setting, we shall now proceed to a discussion of the movement leading to the unique position of the county in consolidation experience. Randolph County ranks among the first in Indiana in point of consolidation. It is now over 95 per cent consolidated. So far as the author is aware, it now stands ahead of any other county in the country. About 1890, before consolidation commenced, there were 131 rural schools of the small-scale type in Randolph County. At the present writing (June, 1920) there are only 3 left; word from the county superintendent of schools, Mr. O. H. Greist, is that measures are being taken to add 2 of these to adjoining consolidated districts by fall. In place of the 131 abandoned one-room schools, there are 21 consolidated schools, 5 of which are graded schools only and 16 of which have both graded and high-school departments. Six of the latter are located in the open country.

[1] See map, Appendix B.

The success of these schools is shown in part at least by the following data issued from the county superintendent's office, April 12, 1920.

TABLE II

SOME RESULTS FROM SCHOOL CONSOLIDATION

SCHOOLS, TEACHERS, AND PUPILS	NUMBER OF SCHOOLS	
	Before Consolidation	After Consolidation April, 1920
One-room schools	131	4
Commissioned high schools	1	16
High-school pupils	61	718
Teachers in graded schools	148	86
Percentage of eighth-grade graduates in high school	21–50	96

In 1915 of 240 eighth-grade graduates, 230 entered high school.

In 1916 of 242 eighth-grade graduates, 230 entered high school.

In 1917 of 253 eighth-grade graduates, 243 entered high school.

In 1918 of 232 eighth-grade graduates, 227 entered high school.

From an educational and social standpoint, among the young folks alone, these schools have vast possibilities. As they come to touch more and more closely the lives of all young people within their districts, they will to that degree grow more efficient as builders of a community

consciousness. When the young folks now in these schools become active in the business affairs of the district, they are going to have a greater sense of the community significance of the district than will their elders. The training together at their educational center develops in the boys and girls of the consolidated district a relationship to the district as a whole; a community sense grows up out of acquaintanceship with boys and girls from all parts of the district.

In an undated report of an address given by Lee L. Driver, former county superintendent of schools of Randolph County, we have the following view concerning community activities of the consolidated school:

> No school is at its best unless it functions as a community center, neither is a community at its best unless its interests center in and around its school. For this reason the school as a community center has been employed very largely. The school buildings are used for all kinds of legitimate community meetings. During this past winter, they have been used for Farmers' Institutes, which have been attended by more than four thousand people. Community Clubs, Parent-Teachers' Associations, Farmers' Clubs, Sunday School Conventions, Community Socials, Lecture Courses, School Plays, Concerts and nearly every commencement will be held in a consolidated school. When a meeting is announced, it is understood that it will be held in the school building.

This has brought people together who otherwise would have been almost unknown to each other, and whose influence upon the community would have been lost. The consolidated school in this way serves as the greatest socializer that a community can possibly have.

In a case of such complete consolidation as given in Randolph County, it is of much interest from a community-study standpoint to see how the various consolidated schools have divided the area among themselves. The question arises, Have they followed what seems to be the outline of natural communities, or is there a tendency to adhere to the straight and previously established township and other civil boundaries?

An inspection of the map of Randolph County (Appendix B), giving the outlines of the districts and the location of the consolidated schools, shows that, in some cases, township lines have been disregarded. Illustration is found in Monroe Township, where between its two schools and Stony Creek Township on the south a river is used as the dividing line. Also, on the west, the county line is disregarded and, on the east, the school district in Monroe Township extends beyond the township line into White River Township. In the case between Nettle Creek and West River townships,

we find a school located on the line and a consolidated district carved out of portions of the two areas. Small village and town centers have been utilized to a considerable extent and a consolidated district thrown around them.

On the whole, it seems that the people have done well in outlining their consolidated districts in comformity with natural, socio-economic units of population. There are a few instances where the former boundaries of civil areas seem to have had undue influence. One of the most striking of these is the long, narrow consolidated district in the eastern part of Washington Township, with the school located very near the township line; another case might be that of the consolidated graded district adjoining this one on the east.

A study of the various consolidated school districts of Randolph County shows that, in the main, the farmers and their families do recognize their district as their community for the major portion, at least, of their social, economic, and religious activities. Besides co-operating upon this basis in the support of their school, they co-operate also in the support of their farmers' clubs, meetings, picnics, and

the like, as pointed out in the previously mentioned address of the former county superintendent. These facts are well shown by Tables III, IV, and V. The census figures here given are taken from the 1920 Federal Census. The data relating to the areas of the school districts were obtained with the aid of school trustees, who assisted in the construction of the accompanying map. All other data were given by County Agricultural Agent Hodgson, formerly of Randolph County; some of these data are a matter of record in the office of the county agricultural agent at Winchester.

There are four consolidated graded schools which are not included in the table; they have small districts, are generally two-room schools, and their districts are not social and economic units.

Many interesting facts may be observed by a study of the tables, which reflect, however, only a portion of the social and economic activities of the people. These tables are not intended to be complete, but to represent the general tendencies of movements in the county. The districts containing no town or village show less variety and less leadership in community life. Storekeepers, bankers, and other business

TABLE III

NAME, LOCATION, AND AREA OF CONSOLIDATED DISTRICTS

Name of Consolidated District	Location of District	Area of District in Square Miles
Saragota.....	East part of Ward Township	14.50
Jefferson.....	West part of Ward Township	21.50
Jackson.....	Jackson Township	30.00
Ridgeville....	Franklin Township	24.00
Green.....	Green Township	29.25
Parker.....	West part of Monroe Township	19.00
Farmland....	East part of Monroe Township	27.50
Stony Creek..	Stony Creek Township	23.00
McKinley....	West part of White River Township	32.50
Lincoln.....	East part of White River Township	37.50
Wayne.....	South part of Wayne Township	26.50
Spartanburg..	East part of Greensfork Township	30.00
Lynn.....	East part of Washington Township	21.00
Beech Grove..	West part of Washington Township	16.00
Huntsville....	West River Township	27.00
Modoc.....	Between Nettle Creek and West River townships	29.00
Losantville...	West part of Nettle Creek Township	20.00

TABLE IV

AREA OF TOWNSHIPS AND DENSITY OF POPULATION

Township	Area in Square Miles	Persons Per Square Mile*
Franklin.....	24	26.3
Green.....	29¼	27.8
Greensfork.....	50+	36.0
Jackson.....	30	37.2
Monroe.....	29¼	28.6
Nettle Creek.....	31½	27.3
Stony Creek.....	26½	35.4
Ward.....	36	35.5
Wayne.....	40+	35.7
Washington.....	44	33.0
West River.....	40	31.0
White River.....	72	32.4

* Data here relate to the open country exclusive of all villages and towns as listed in 1920 Census, Table I.

TABLE V

Consolidated Districts, Their Urban Centers and Chief Community Events

Name of Consolidated District	Name of Town or Village	Population of Town or Village	Churches In		Outstanding Community Activities
			Center	Country	
Saratoga	Saratoga	327	2	0	.....
Jefferson	Deerfield	No census data	1	1	Farmers' Institute association meets monthly
Jackson	No town in area	.....	.....	4	Community meeting monthly at school
Ridgeville	Ridgeville	1,042	3	1	Annual Old Settlers' picnic Community fair in October
Green	No town in area	.....	.....	5	Plays and entertainments at school
Parker	Parker	697	3	No data	Social, Lyceum, school plays
Farmland	Farmland	878	3	2	Annual fall community fair, annual corn show
Stony Creek	Very small hamlet in edge of area	.....	.....	3	Lacks leadership
McKinley	At edge of Winchester	.....	.....	2	School center to certain extent; proximity to city detracts
Lincoln	Winchester	4,021	No data	2	Chief events at Winchester
South part of Wayne	No town in area	.....	.....	3	Annual Farmers' Institute, School Socials
Spartanburg	Spartanburg	No census data	1	2	Lyceum, annual spring opening of store
Lynn	Lynn	898	2	1	Community fair
Beech Grove	No town in area	.....	.....	2	Interest declining
Huntsville	Huntsville	No census data	1	No data	Farmers' Institute association meets monthly
Modoc	Modoc	256	2	No data	School lyceum
Losantville	Losantville	321	2	No data	Lacks leadership

men in some of the small towns of this county are great assets to their communities. They

TABLE VI

MEMBERSHIP IN FARMERS' FEDERATION AND AVERAGE ATTENDANCE AT FARMERS' MEETINGS IN CONSOLIDATED DISTRICTS

NAME OF CONSOLIDATED DISTRICT	MEMBERS OF COUNTY FARMERS' FEDERATION	ATTENDANCE AT		
		Annual Farmers' Institute	1915 Farm Club Meetings	Other Farmers' Meetings
Saratoga Jefferson	70	130 194	120; 45; 120 118; 100; 75; 40; 45	Horse meeting, 45 Orchard meeting, 25 Oat-smut meeting, 38
Jackson	94	550	75; 90; 60; 10; 30	Horse meeting, 65 Oat-smut meeting, 52
Ridgeville	93	130	120	Parent-teachers, 125 Oat-smut meeting, 9
Green	32	450	45; 65; 100; 100	Oat-smut meeting, 38
Parker Farmland	87	200 200	....	..... Oat-smut meeting, 44 Arbor Day, 200
Stony Creek	31	.....	150; 25; 25	Oat-smut meeting, 70
McKinley Lincoln	29	Farmers' Institute held in Winchester	70; 64; 49; 15 120; 45; 120	Oat-smut meeting, 18 Oat-smut meeting, 25
Wayne	68	350	68	Horse meeting, 20 Oat-smut meeting, 40
Spartanburg	153	500	47; 45; 25; 20	Horse meeting, 72 Oat-smut meeting, 89
Lynn	88	350	.....	Orchard meeting, 52
Beech Grove	.....	.....	65; 65; 54; 60; 100; 49; 30	Tractor meeting, 75 Oat-smut meeting, 52
Huntsville	110	124	42; 47; 75	Parent-teachers, 85 Oat-smut meeting, 88
Modoc Losantville	32	310	65; 35; 130; 90	Oat-smut meeting, 35 Oat-smut meeting, 46

help with corn shows, fairs, institutes, and the like. It seems that Randolph County, on the

whole, has been right in forming her consolidated districts, whenever possible, around the local town or village.

2. MARSHALL COUNTY, IOWA

Marshall County is situated near the central part of the state; it is square in outline and contains 576 square miles, the greater part of which is well-improved farming land. This is strictly an agricultural county, producing corn, oats, wheat, hay, and live stock. It is one of the good agricultural counties of Iowa. The soil consists chiefly of a black to brown silt loam, except along the Iowa River and some of the larger streams where, because of heavy timbering, it is of a lighter character. The topography is chiefly undulating to rolling. The Iowa River flows from the north to the southeast through the upper half of the county; it, together with its larger tributaries, gives adjacent timbered and broken areas. Marshalltown is the county seat and only city in the area. All the other towns and villages in the county are farmers' small trading-centers. Marshalltown is a good farmers' county-seat city and draws much of its resources from the surrounding country. According to the 1910

Federal Census, it had a population of 13,374; its population at present comes close to 16,000. The 1920 Federal Census for Marshall County is not available at this writing, but the following table (VII) of the 1910 Census will give a fair indication of the distribution of the population.

Data obtained in the office of the county agricultural agent at Marshalltown show that there are 2,200 farm homes in Marshall County, and that they average about five persons per home and four homes per section of land. This gives the farms an average size of 160 acres. This density of population on the farm is quite uniform throughout the county, varying a little here and there. In some of the timbered areas settlement may be found somewhat closer, and in a few prairie areas somewhat more diffused.

The farms and farm homes in Marshall County show thrift and indicate a progressive people. The roads are dirt, but well built, and placed, as a general rule, on section lines. Communication is good throughout the county. Considerable complaint is made of the roads during portions of the winter and spring when they may become difficult of passage.

TABLE VII

POPULATION STATISTICS FOR MARSHALL COUNTY, IOWA*

Marshall County, Iowa	30,279
Bangor Township	537
Eden Township, including Edenville town	968
Edenville town	448
Greencastle Township, including Ferguson and Gilman	1,362
Ferguson town	127
Gilman town	430
Iowa Township, including Albion town	771
Albion town	457
Jefferson Township, including Laurel town	952
Laurel town	179
Le Grand Township, including Le Grand town	1,385
Le Grand town	338
Liberty Township, including St. Anthony town	879
St. Anthony town	199
Linn Township	976
Liscomb Township, including Liscomb town	944
Liscomb town	354
Logan Township, including Melbourne town	1,079
Melbourne town	423
Marietta Township	732
Marion Township	971
Marshall Township, co-extensive with Marshalltown City	13,374
Marshalltown City	13,374
Minerva Township, including Clemons town	927
Clemons town	213
State Center Township, including State Center town	1,537
State Center town	898
Taylor Township	446
Timber Creek Township	976
Vienna Township	675
Washington Township	787

* Taken from 1910 Federal Census, Report on Population.

As close a study has not been made of Marshall County as was made of Randolph County because of the newness of consolidation

TABLE VIII

GENERAL SURVEY OF MARSHALL COUNTY*

Township	Tenancy, High or Low	Chief Nationality	Topography	Prevailing Type of Farming	Other Farmers' Organizations† Present
Bangor	.....	English	Rough	General	Friends' church
Eden	Middle-low	German	.....	Live stock	Community club, consolidated school
Green Castle	Middle-high	Irish	.....	General	Consolidated school
Iowa	Low	.....	.....	Live stock	Consolidated school Co-operative elevator
Jefferson	.....	German	.....	General	Shipping association, Co-operative elevator. parochial school
Le Grand	.....	English	.....	Live stock	Friends' church club, Co-operative elevato , consolidated school -
Liberty	Low	.....	.....	Live stock	Consolidated school, live-stock shipping association, Friends' church, creamery and elevators
Linn	.....	.....	Rough	General	.....
Liscomb	Middle-high	.....	.....	Grain	.....
Logan	Middle-low	.....	.....	General	Consolidated school (2), community club
Marietta	Middle-high	.....	Subject to overflow	General	Farmers' club
Marion	High	.....	Hilly	General	Co-operative elevator, lumber yard, community club
Marshall	High	.....	.....	Truck	.....
Minerva	.....	.....	.....	Live stock	.....
State Center	.....	German	.....	General	Co-operative creamery
Taylor	.....	.....	.....	Live stock	Farmers' club
Timber Creek	Middle-high	.....	Rough	General	.....
Vienna	.....	German	.....	General	Farmers' community club
Washington	.....	.....	.....	General	Consolidated school, community club

* Data furnished by Murl McDonald, state leader of county agricultural agents, Ames, Iowa.

† Reference here is probably to the Farm Bureau Association.

to this section and to Iowa. It is thought, however, that the trend of the movement in this county and the policy being adopted make it worth while to look into the situation.

There are fourteen consolidated school districts in the county, and six consolidations partly within the county and partly within adjoining counties. The size of the districts ranges from 12 to 28 square miles and in all except two cases the districts are formed around town and village centers. County Superintendent of Schools C. E. Shutt, of Marshalltown, writing under date of April 2, 1920, makes the following statements concerning the community value and general aspects of the consolidated school district:

> The consolidated schools of this county contain on an average about twenty sections. It would be better if they had a greater acreage, and they would be larger if it were not for the fear, which I think is largely unfounded, that the increased size would augment the difficulties of transportation. Township and even county lines are disregarded in the formation of them. The idea governing them is that of efficient community service rather than that of conformity to established lines of previous organizations. The territory included in them forms a unit for social, educational and sometimes religious centers. The school building is constructed usually with a gymnasium which can be used for games, lectures and other purposes where the

people of the community meet. The domestic science equipment, installed for school purposes, is convenient when it is desired to serve lunch on these public occasions.

The data relating to the project record for the year ending December 31, 1918, represent attendance of farmers in the various townships at meetings held by the county agricultural agent. In conversation with the agent, he stated that these data represent, in the main, attendance from consolidated school districts, where they are found in the township, because most of his meetings are staged at the school. The county home demonstration agent and county agricultural agent both state that the consolidated school district as a unit of rural life greatly facilitates their work; that the people in these districts act more unitedly and more effectively than do those in the other areas of the county.

The county home demonstration agent has, within the county, about fifteen ladies' organizations which recognize, to a very large extent, the consolidated school district as the unit in the formation of their organizations. Although the methods of organization of both farm-bureau and home-demonstration work is based, in accordance with uniform state plans, upon

TABLE IX

PROJECT RECORD FOR MARSHALL COUNTY, IOWA*
(For year ending December 31, 1918)

Township	Nature of Work Done	Number of Meetings Held	Attendance†
Bangor	Dual demonstration: wheat diseases	1	20
	Cow-test association	1	4
	Seed corn	1	25
	Liming demonstration	.....	.....
Eden	Junior club	1	.....
	Seed corn	1	25
	Swine production	1	30
	Liming demonstration	.....	.....
Green Castle	Soy beans	1	8
	Cow-test association	1	4
	Hog cholera	1	25
	Swine production	1	30
	Liming demonstration	.....	.....
Iowa	Cow-test association	1	4
	Junior club	1	60
	Seed corn	1	25
Jefferson	Dual demonstration: wheat diseases	1	20
	Seed corn	1	25
	Swine production	1	30
Le Grand	Dual demonstration	1	20
	Poultry	1	20
	Junior club	1	60
	Seed corn	1	25
	Swine production	1	30

* Data here furnished by Murl McDonald, state leader of county agricultural agents, Ames, Iowa.

† The data relating to attendance at meetings are evidently approximations in many cases. Their value lies in showing the general trend of interest in such activities in rural communities.

TABLE IX—*Continued*

Township	Nature of Work Done	Number of Meetings Held	Attendance
Liberty	Junior club	1	60
	Farmers' Institute	2	45
	Dual demonstration: wheat diseases	1	20
	Liming demonstration	.....	.....
	Cow-test association	1	4
Linn	Dual demonstration	1	20
Liscomb	Dual demonstration: wheat diseases	1	20
	Cow-test association	1	4
	Junior club	1	60
Logan	Junior club	2	.....
	Seed corn	1	25
	Swine production	1	30
	Seed corn	1	25
Marietta	Orchard spraying	1	25
Marion	Seed corn	1	25
Marshall	Egg candling	3	40
	Hog cholera	1	25
	Bee meeting	1	26
Minerva	Dual demonstration: wheat diseases	1	20
	Cow-test association	1	4
	Seed corn	1	25
	Co-operative creamery meeting	1	40
	Co-operative creamery picnic	1	300
State Center	Dual demonstration: wheat diseases	1	20
	Junior club	1	60
	Hog cholera	1	25
	Seed corn	1	25
	Swine production	1	30

TABLE IX—*Continued*

Township	Nature of Work Done	Number of Meetings Held	Attendance
Taylor	Cow-test association	1	4
	Community club	1	60
	Community club	1	60
Timber Creek	Swine production	1	30
Vienna‡	Cane meeting	1	15
Washington	Dual demonstration	1	20
	Soy beans	1	.....
	Cow-test association	1	5
	Junior club	1	60
	Seed corn	1	25
	Swine production	1	30
County-wide projects	Seed corn	2	33
	Swine congress	12	1,137
	Soil survey	2	20
	Exchange farm labor—420 placed	.....	.....
	Wheat acreage	1	60
	Cane mill	.....	.....
	Barberry eradication	.....	.....
	Threshers' association	3	300
	Fall wheat survey	3	.....
	Fall seed-corn survey	1	.....
	Stock-judging contest	1	34
	County fair	....	.....
	State fair exhibit	.....	.....
	Swine congress	4	500

‡ Farmers in southern part of Vienna Township attend community meetings in Marion Township.

the township as the unit, both agents in Marshall County look forward to the time when it may be changed and based, instead, upon the consolidated school district unit.

One of the interesting features of the study of the Marshall County consolidated school districts is the disregard the people show for formerly established county, township, and the district-school boundary lines. The accompanying county map,[1] showing the outlines of the consolidated districts, illustrates this point. They bound the consolidated district as accurately as possible by the limits of their natural community, all having equal opportunity to say whether or not they wish to affiliate with the new unit. The only limitation the law imposes is that the district lines must follow either quarter-section or section lines.

[1] See Appendix C.

CHAPTER VII

THE CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL DISTRICT—*Continued*

(Views from Various Sources)

There will be brought together in this chapter the results of correspondence with educators in different states relative to the community value of the consolidated school district. Newspaper articles, various educational reports, and bulletins have also been used in presenting the general trend of the consolidation movement as it relates itself to our special line of investigation. Most of the material will be presented as it came to the writer, using direct quotations in large part. The aim is to show, in the words of leaders themselves, the feeling held toward this new district unit and the direction of the movement.

I. COLORADO

Consolidation of schools is progressing rather rapidly in some sections of this state. The state superintendent of public instruction in

a letter under date of March 23, 1920, writes as follows:

The state has many fine consolidations. One of the very best is the Sargent consolidation. This is a typical rural consolidation and embraces at least eight ordinary school districts. They have a large auditorium to accommodate the community and where all the community services are held.

Nearly all of Rio Grande County is now made up of consolidated districts. There are four in the entire county with four small outlying school districts, which in time will join one of the consolidations.

Miss Carrie Dietrich, county superintendent of schools of Rio Grande County, has the following to say concerning the consolidations above referred to:

. . . . The valuations in the consolidated districts are all over $3,000,000. This has made it possible to get enough money to run a good school.

I have found that there is no organization as successful as the rural consolidated school to reach the farmers.

2. NORTH DAKOTA

Under date of March 29, 1920, the state superintendent of public instruction says in a letter to the author:

For twelve years I was County Superintendent of Barnes County, North Dakota, and worked directly with the rural districts.

I can testify to the facts that the Civic-Social activities of these rural neighborhoods center about the consolidated

school and I only wish you might visit some of them to see their activity. We had a County Lyceum Course, a County Debating League and a County Athletic League.

The county superintendent of schools of McHenry County, North Dakota, writes on April 5, 1920:

About two-thirds of the children in the county are now in consolidated schools. There are no towns in the county that have over 1,000 inhabitants so that this means that it is the country children who are in the consolidated schools. There are twenty-three in the county, four of which are open-country schools. The others are all located in small villages or towns, and my experience has been that the schools located in the towns and villages are the most successful. Some of the main reasons for this are: better roads to the villages, especially during winter; better accommodations for teachers, better care of school buildings and property during vacations and easier to get janitors.

None of the consolidated districts are less than eighteen [square] miles, most of them include thirty-six square miles, and we have a few that embrace as much territory as forty-five square miles. Where no natural obstacles like rivers or waste land intervene, the township of thirty-six square miles seems to be about the most suitable sized district.

There is no doubt but that the consolidated school is the natural center for community activities and in all my schools some work along these lines is being done. Community meetings, lecture courses, entertainments, political meetings, Red Cross meetings, are some of the various things carried on. This fact was not realized so fully when we first begun consolidating our schools, but every consolidated school that is built now is equipped with a good auditorium or gathering place.

Professor Charles G. Carlson, of the department of agricultural education of the North Dakota Agricultural College, writes as follows, under date of April 12, 1920:

Replying to your letter of March 30th relative to the proper local unit upon which to build our rural organizations, it is my opinion that the "township" is the unit on which such work must rest. Here in this state there are smaller units than the township and even larger units in consolidated areas. Considering the population, the amount of wealth and the ordinary cohesion within townships together with the fact that the consolidated school is usually in the center or section sixteen, I can not see how any other unit has more advantages than the township.

In the case of the Noltimier district where I spent three years as principal, I found that buying, selling, school work and even road-building were done better on the township basis than on the district basis. Our townships in this state average possibly two hundred and ninety people in the eastern part, but have often not more than fifteen or twenty in the western part. The amount of wealth in the eastern part of the state is large enough to support township high schools, but this is not true of the western part of the state, so that the statements made, you will see, apply only to the eastern half of the state.

Writing again on May 6, 1920, Professor Carlson further states:

The organizations that use the schoolhouse for their meetings are as follows: The Society of Equity, the Non-Partisan League and various local clubs and churches. All elections are usually held in the consolidated school.

3. IOWA

Professor Macy Campbell, head of the department of rural education of Iowa State Teachers' College, Cedar Falls, Iowa, states in a letter dated April 5, 1920, that

> Iowa consolidated schools are developed around natural community centers, quite often a town and its trade territory, and pay no attention to township or county lines. The school district lines are often followed in establishing the boundaries of consolidated school districts.
>
> We believe every rural school district in Iowa is so situated that it can be satisfactorily taken into a consolidated school organization; this has already been done with more than 2,500 districts.

On March 9, Professor Campbell wrote that there were more than 340 consolidated schools in Iowa. He further states:

> The tendency in Iowa now is to organize consolidated districts of from thirty to fifty square miles. Improvement in transportation through better roads and better motor vehicles makes the fifty square mile district more satisfactory as a unit than the smaller ones.
>
> The well developed consolidated school becomes the center of social and economic life in the community and is the most effective force in Iowa at the present time in rural community leadership and development. I have detected no tendency so far in this state to make the consolidated school district the political unit.

In *The Iowa Homestead*, published at Des Moines, Iowa, issue of February 26, 1920,

Professor Campbell discussed "The New Rural School in Orange Township," located in Butler County. He stated in part, relative to this very successful consolidated school:

> The new school brings all the children of the community together to become acquainted with each other and learn to work together more successfully in a co-operative way in developing the possibilities of the community. The success of the remarkable community church, the co-operative egg selling association, co-operative creamery, co-operative telephone organization, co-operative cow testing association, co-operative threshing and silo filling associations in Orange township testifies to the value of such community co-operation.

4. ILLINOIS

This state we find has two good legislative enactments of recent establishment (1919) looking to the formation of schools upon the community basis, namely, community high schools and community consolidated district schools. Township high schools have also been in operation in this state, there being some notable outstanding examples from the community point of view. The community high schools which are being organized under the law of 1919 are practically the same kind of school as are the township high schools.

County Superintendent B. C. Moore, of McLean County, writing April 29, 1920, says of these districts in his county:

> The high-school districts are large and over-lie from twelve to fifteen elementary schools districts. All of these communities are looking forward to community and civic life in their new building.

A community consolidated district located near Funk's Grove, Superintendent Moore says, is very prosperous. It embraces 27 sections of land and leads in organized life in the way of lectures, entertainments, programs of various kinds, and festivals.

In the Bloomington, Illinois, *Daily Pantagraph* of April 6, 1920, Superintendent Moore, in an article on township and community high schools, states:

> Township and community high schools are being organized in every county of the state. In addition to the school facilities that will come to these communities it is believed that such school buildings will be made social and library centers.

5. OKLAHOMA

E. A. Duke, rural-school supervisor, states that there are a large number of successful consolidated schools in Oklahoma. He feels that the size of the population and the amount of wealth is about right for the most successful

unit in a district of 36 square miles. In his *Report on Rural Centralized Graded and Model Schools*, issued by the state superintendent of public instruction, in 1918, Supervisor Duke enumerates twenty-two advantages of the consolidated school to the community. A few of them are as follows:

> Consolidation leads to better roads, better homes, increased land values, pride in community and civic improvement.
>
> The consolidated school becomes the community center and leads to improvement through lectures, debates and other forms of entertainment.
>
> Leads to co-operation along all lines.
>
> When the people realize that they are providing advantages for their children equal to those of any other district, self respect and respect for the community increases manyfold.
>
> Has a broadening influence on the people, as they become accustomed to thinking in terms larger than the one-room school.

A more exhaustive study covering the consolidated school district as found in every state in the Union would be valuable. There are many states where the educators in charge of the movement have vision and foresight relative to the community value of the district, and are embodying this in their plans for consolidation. This matter was brought out clearly at the last National Conference on

School Consolidation which was held at Cedar Falls, Iowa, during the third week in February, 1920. A partial report of this conference is found in *The Iowa Homestead* of February 26, 1920, from which the following quotation is taken:

> Consolidated schools are not only educational centers, but social and community centers as well. Consolidation is a form of organization that is dovetailing itself into the great organized farmer movement all over the country and we cannot afford to neglect to fairly study its possibilities with immediate cost as of secondary importance.

6. SUMMARY

Some important details have been brought out in the last two chapters which will receive emphasis and summation at this point.

In choosing the consolidated school district as the best unit of rural organization of general application, there are a number of rather specific factors which should be clearly kept in mind if proper values are to come from it. The first of these is that provision must be made for a good, effective high-school department in connection with the consolidation. No farm boy and girl nowadays should be without the opportunity to obtain close at hand as good a high-school education as any other

boy or girl. Arguments pro and con a high-school education are not necessary in this study, but suffice it to say at this point that farmers themselves are becoming fully awake to the advantages of having high-school facilities for their children. As a witness to this, we found in our study in chapter vi that sixteen of the consolidated districts of Randolph County, Indiana, have provided good high-school departments, all of which are listed as commissioned high schools by the state of Indiana. We also saw that every consolidated school in Marshall County, Iowa, either now has, or is providing for, a four-year high-school department.

Granted that the consolidated district must support a good high school as well as the graded departments, the next important feature is the size of the high school that should be considered as a minimum standard. In an endeavor to arrive at a minimum figure in enrolment below which a high school should not sink, the author realizes full well that there will be exceptions. These need not blind one, however, to the generally prevailing facts. A close study of the situation shows that there are vast numbers of consolidations which, in

the beginning, were not projected upon a large enough basis, and that these, in many instances, after the first flush of newness and novelty wore off, have become burdensome; especially so when the opportunities were not at hand for enlarging the consolidated area. A consolidated district projected on too small a basis does not give sufficient numbers of pupils to maintain a first-class high school and does not furnish an effective, varied, and diversified community life. There also must be enough wealth included to give the proper financial support to local institutions.

The enrolment of some of the successful consolidated schools studied in these two chapters may be taken as a clue in arriving at a minimum. The Melbourne consolidated district, which is a very successful one in Marshall County, Iowa, has a high-school enrolment of sixty. The Orange Township consolidated school reported in this chapter has an enrolment of sixty-nine. The schools in Randolph County, Indiana, which show the greatest success, all have enrolments of sixty and above, and, generally, not less than four teachers in high-school work. The author, out of his own experience as a high-school teacher and

principal, has been thoroughly impressed with the fact that an enrolment of seventy-five to one hundred furnishes a better working group than one below seventy-five. An enrolment of fifty is reaching a point of doubtful efficiency, as a general proposition. As a minimum figure to be held in mind in forming a consolidated district with a good four-year high-school department, sixty pupils will insure greater success than fifty.

In close connection with the minimum high-school enrolment comes the minimum size of district. Many of the states studied make no recommendations on this matter, which it seems to the writer is a mistake. Some low-water mark should be set by the law to insure greater stability and success to the movement and to furnish a guidepost. Some states have specified a minimum size of district as well as taxable wealth, and then generally encourage consolidation on a more extensive scale. The Iowa school law states that not less than 16 sections of adjoining land shall constitute a consolidated district; but we note in Professor Macy Campbell's letter of March 9, given above, that the tendency in Iowa is to organize consolidated districts of from 30 to 50 square miles.

In Oklahoma, the minimum area specified by the law is 25 sections of contiguous land and a taxable valuation of $200,000. An exception is made in case of taxable valuations of $500,000 or over, when districts of less than 25 square miles may be formed. E. A. Duke, the rural-school inspector, however, in his correspondence and reports states that the size of population and the amount of wealth are in better relation for a successful district with a land area of 36 square miles.

In North Dakota, the minimum size of district is placed at 18 sections of contiguous land. Here again we find that the successful consolidations embrace about 36 or more square miles, because size of population and wealth are more satisfactory.

In Randolph County, Indiana, we find a number of small districts, which are, even with their density of population, on the border lines of efficiency. Some of these will doubtless be enlarged by further consolidations of adjoining territory now included in consolidated grade areas. A study of Table I, page 61, Tables III, IV, V, and VI, pages 68, 68, 69, and 70, respectively, giving density of population, size of areas, social and economic features, and

other like matters, shows that such districts as Spartanburg, Wayne, Jackson, Farmland, and Lincoln, with a density of population ranging around and above thirty-two per square mile and a size of district ranging around and above 30 square miles, give the greatest diversity of interests and of activities. The larger population in these districts finds more to arouse interest. The density of population is such as to promote neighborly feeling and commonness of purpose. Of course, such districts cannot be held as models in the case of a sparsely settled country like North Dakota, but they show rather valuable features for a moderately settled, general-farming region.

In Marshall County, Iowa, the smaller districts ranging around 12 and 14 square miles were formed under an old law. Information given the author was that some of these will be enlarged by additions of unconsolidated territory and others may be split up to form larger districts.

The size of the district and its population and the amount of wealth will be variable matters in different parts of the country. The figures here given point to what seem to be the tendencies in these factors. Whatever the

location of the district, its size, its wealth, and the amount of its population should be enough to maintain a first-class four-year high school and a graded school, the former having a minimum enrolment of about sixty pupils. When this requirement is met, a really effective socio-economic unit will have been formed, which will give volume of population enough, sufficient diversity of interests, and wealth enough to provide most of the institutions and interests of the farm groups.

One last important factor, often mentioned in the foregoing chapters, which must not be lost sight of in the carving out of consolidated districts, is the attainment of proper cohesion and social relationship within the newly formed district. This is a subtle matter difficult to meet and yet of prime importance. This feature, as often pointed out, has all too frequently been disregarded, or militated against, especially in the formation of rubber-stamped areas, like the township and many small school district systems. Great care must be exercised in the placing of consolidated school district lines to see that they throw together groups which want to be and should be together.

This cohesion will find expression in various ways. The historical development of the area or community may play a big part in determining what groups cling to one another and work for their common interests. Sometimes kindred ties extending over an appreciable territory will help in determining cohesive groups. Sometimes trade relations at a common center have built up an acquaintanceship and fellow-feeling which can be definitely outlined and followed as a guide in placing a consolidated district.

Topographical features have often caused certain areas to be very definitely marked out and these frequently have been real, effective communities.

In the construction of this new socio-economic unit (the consolidated school district), therefore, all these factors should be used as guides, to be supplemented by the free choice of the people themselves as exercised by the ballot.

Facilities for intercourse, condition of roads, density of population, are all factors aiding or retarding cohesion and playing a great part in the regulation of the size of the district.

CHAPTER VIII

ORGANIZATION OF FORCES AND METHODS OF ORGANIZATION WITHIN THE LOCAL UNIT

In our study of the local unit we found many forces and agencies at work in rural life. They seemed, in some cases, to be developing around certain plans or in accordance with certain policies. In other cases there did not appear to be any plans or any policies, just forces and institutions, developing or existing in their own individualistic manner. We have seen also that, in rural communities, there are latent forces, awaiting development and the life-giving power of organization and leadership.

Some of the forces and institutions that have been met may be mentioned here as follows: churches, granges, farm-bureau organizations, home-economics associations, schools, cooperative organizations, fairs, clubs, institutes, parent-teachers' associations, and neighborhood and community consciousness. The organization of these and others which helps give expression to rural life, and fitting them, one with

another, into a general scheme of things for the complete development of the community in the interests of the common welfare, is the problem of next importance.

This phase of our study, like that of the determination of the local unit, is still in its infancy throughout the country. Only rather general deductions can be made here, but these will be drawn as closely as possible from good sources.

There are several groups and individuals working out, in their own manner, systems and plans for rural organization. Politicians, economists, and social workers are all seeking a workable plan. The Farm Bureau is endeavoring to find the best organization, as well as the best local unit of rural life, upon which to base its great work which pertains, in the main, to production and marketing. The Home Bureau is an expression of the organization of farm women along similar lines. The American Red Cross is another agency trying to work out the organization of rural life, especially along the physical and health side. The National Conference of Social Work is trying to find itself in a program of organization of rural social forces. A plan has been outlined by the Massachusetts Agricultural College of forming in a rural

community a council of all the agencies working for rural life. In North Carolina we have a quite different plan (referred to in chap. v, pp. 56 and 57, and in Appendix A), which is interested in overhauling county government in the interests of both economic and social agencies for the benefit of the farm population.

A complete study of each one of these plans, were it possible, would be valuable at this point. We shall attempt here to bring together some of the main features only of the suggestions of leaders along these lines and discuss them in the light of the general conclusions which have been reached.

That no one plan of organization will suit all communities alike is a commonplace. Flexibility must be allowed in any scheme so that it may fit local variations. That there must be a need for organization before it will succeed is also a commonplace. Such a thing cannot be forced upon a people, but must await proper growth in powers to appreciate. The idea of community organization, also, as a general proposition, is a new idea in most rural communities. The communities must first be convinced that it is needed and that it will accomplish what the community desires.

Professor T. N. Carver says:

> Not only must there be a distinct need for organization, but each committee should be constructed to deal with one specific need. The first thing to decide, therefore, is what are the principal needs of the community in question in order that the proper committee may be constituted.[1]

He reaches the conclusion that there are ten principal or leading needs in the average rural community in the United States. He divides them into two groups, namely, business and social, placing five needs in each group. The ten needs are represented by separate committees from the community. A central committee is formed by the chairmen of the subcommittees (each of the ten) and officers of the organization, who represent the entire number, and who act for the community at large, in the way of shaping policies and the control of business affairs of the organization. The following is Professor Carver's outline:

NEEDS OF RURAL COMMUNITIES WHICH REQUIRE ORGANIZATION

I. Business Needs:
   1. Better farm production
   2. Better marketing facilities

[1] T. N. Carver, *The Organization of a Rural Community*, p. 4. *United States Department of Agriculture Yearbook*, separate. (Washington, D.C.: United States Department of Agriculture, 1915.)

3. Better means of securing farm supplies
4. Better credit facilities
5. Better means of communication:
   a) Roads
   b) Telephones

II. Social Needs:
1. Better educational facilities
2. Better sanitation
3. Better opportunities for recreation
4. Beautification of the country-side
5. Better home economics

After outlining in the foregoing way what the author conceives to be of application to the average community, he goes into considerable detail in a discussion of duties, aims, and functions of the various communities.[1]

In the main, this is a good plan; it is broad and can be made to cover a wide range. There are many valuable suggestions contained in it. The most serious trouble to be met in placing such a plan in the average community, however, is to be found in the great dearth of proper leadership to execute it. The plan is also deficient in necessary machinery, and the committees may find no dynamic action following their well-laid recommendations. It does not represent or include organizations which might well play a large part in molding action.

[1] *Ibid.*, pp. 11–53.

The Massachusetts plan of a council of the forces working in a community is quite a different scheme from the foregoing. It seeks to pull together all the organizations and forces through a general council. This is a comprehensive plan and will be given here only in part as follows:

1. Conference of a Few. [This is a general or preliminary get-together by representatives of each local organization to consider what can be done.]
2. Organization Representatives. [Here is a council which represents the co-ordination of all local interests for initial action.]
3. The First Work.
   a) Bring about a thorough understanding among the various local organizations as to just what each is doing. . . . .
   b) Take up any specific items of community interest which should receive immediate attention.
   c) Call in representatives of county organizations and ascertain in what work they are prepared to co-operate in for your town.
4. The First Community Meeting. [Elect chairman and secretary and discuss improvements needed.]
5. Committees. [Appointed if action in foregoing discussion is favorable and may be as follows:]
   a) Farm production.
   b) Farm business.
   c) Conservation.
   d) Boys' and girls' interests.
   e) Community life.
6. The Second Community Meeting. [It will be an unofficial community gathering to give anyone a chance to object or to offer plans.]

7. Community Plan or Program.
8. Getting Results.
9. Council Meetings.
10. The Annual Community Meeting:
    a) Reports should be made of work done by any organization or group during the past year.
    b) The council committees should report the working plans for the coming year.
    c) The chairman, secretary, and committees for the ensuing year should be chosen.[1]

The chief criticism that can be offered concerning this plan is its great range. It is too broad to fit most communities. It would be better to concentrate on one or two projects in which the community is interested and gradually work up to a complete organization, a thing which will take time and education. A plan too broad in its scope is likely to result in a great many things started and dropped, or only developed to mediocrity.

There are other proposals for the organization of the community which are not as comprehensive or complete as the foregoing. Judge Frank T. Wilson presents a plan in a University of Minnesota bulletin, entitled *Community Service*. He shows how a community may be organized on lines similar to those followed by

[1] E. L. Morgan, *Mobilizing the Rural Community*, Massachusetts Agricultural College Extension Bulletin No. 23, pp. 20–25. (Amherst, Mass.: Massachusetts Agricultural College, 1918.)

boys in organizing a ball club.[1] First by getting together a few fans, then a selection of players or team-leaders for each interest as the boys select catcher, pitcher, back stop, and other players. He states that "of course there will be provided a captain and a board of managers." In discussing another plan, he says:

> . . . . Invite each church, lodge, club, society or like organization to furnish a delegate to a community council. Let the council select the service leader, a managing board, and the various team leaders. Then get busy and serve.

All these schemes for the organization of the forces and institutions within a community have much to recommend them. They assume, however, a rather well-developed organization spirit and more leadership than is generally found in the average community. In many rural sections of the country we may find some rather worthy organizations, but a great inability in the co-ordination of their efforts and work toward a common goal. Again, we may find a total inability on the part of the people to form any worth-while organizations, because of lack of leadership and the proper conception of ideals in community life.

[1] Frank T. Wilson, *Community Service*, pp. 7, 8. (Minneapolis, Minn.: The University of Minnesota Extension Service, 1920.)

Inasmuch as the findings of this investigation have singled out the consolidated school district as the best unit of population, territory, wealth, and the like upon which to place rural organization plans, it becomes very evident that there is no better place to commence the formation of organized life and the co-ordination of the forces of that life than with the consolidated school itself. If the community is adverse to organized effort (as many communities are), then we have at first hand the best of tools, in the school and its officers, to teach the community ideals and aims and to develop policies and goals. If the community is progressive, all well and good, its progress will be accelerated by the aid and influence of the school. No other institution reaches the lives of all in a community as effectively as the school. There is no other institution around which all will rally more quickly, because it stands as their one common institution, maintained and supported by the whole people. The common support of a consolidated school has in countless cases been the one means of uniting the small town and the country community adjacent. The writer had this fact very strongly pointed out to him in the

investigation of the Melbourne consolidated school district in Marshall County, Iowa. Mr. N. B. Nason, president of the school board and a retired farmer, stated that, before consolidation, the people of Melbourne town and the country people were more or less estranged, often unfriendly, and were non-co-operative. Since consolidation, with the new school built within the town limits and the old town school merged with the consolidated one, a most surprising co-operative spirit has developed. He stated that many town and country women get acquainted at the school, either in visits during regular sessions, or at festivals and dinners. The town merchants all have acquired a sense of their partnership with the farmer. The farmer to the farthermost corner of the district feels his allegiance to the school, community, and town. Mr. Nason said the townspeople do not think about having a town boundary, they think in terms of the school district.

The very fact that the people of a community have got together successfully enough to build and equip a consolidated school also gives them confidence in themselves and in their ability to do things. Great is the pride that many communities take in their consolidated

school and its system of education. At this point in community consciousness, which oftentimes is the first glimpse a community gets of itself, is where real organization plans may be initiated, and where constructive policies and ideals may be laid. Here an excellent framework has been erected which connects the community with every other community and with the state and nation at large. An organization of first rank has been created around which all can gather, regardless of church, lodge, grange, society, or other affiliations. In the common moral and financial support of the consolidated school, therefore, we have our first community organization and our chief agency for coordination of agencies, forces, and institutions.

Plays, athletic games, and luncheons held at the school will draw the community together in an informal way, produce acquaintanceship extending throughout the district, and will arouse a community pride.

The spirit of team work grows up, cooperation between individuals and groups develops, all in a most informal way, but all of which, by proper direction and guidance, will lead to more formal relationships and more significant lines of endeavor.

For laying and developing plans for the community, the consolidated school board members, the principal of the school, the county demonstration agents, and the county superintendent of schools are all properly authorized parties and should co-operate in such work. The school board members and the principal are pivotal in this, and proper public opinion will demand that such positions be filled by people who have the newer vision in school affairs. The selection of men and women for these capacities should be made carefully, and that such is the case in many consolidated districts is evidenced by their rapid growth and outstanding community consciousness.

There is no good reason why the consolidated school should not help foster and develop the farmers' institute; both school and institute are educational and social in character. The boys' and girls' club work may also develop in the school. The agricultural agent and home demonstration agent work can most effectively spread out through the school into the homes and on to the farms; the school may well be headquarters in the community for these agencies. The public library may also be under the charge of the school. Organized play for the community

in the form of pageants, various games, picture shows, and athletic contests will find able leadership in the school.

In this connection it will be interesting to review in brief some of the work of the State Community Service Bureau of North Carolina. This bureau works with and through both large and small rural schools. Its various activities illustrate what can be done for the community and neighborhood life with the school as the agency, co-ordinating state, county, and local agencies. The consolidated school, by reason of its greater size and diversity of interests, will be able to make much more of this outside help than will the small one-room school.

A. E. Howell, superintendent of public welfare of Wayne County, North Carolina, in a report just issued dealing with the Community Service Bureau in that county, states:

> In each county where the service is operative, the State Bureau places an automobile truck with a portable electric lighting system and moving picture machine. A woman director and a mechanic are employed and ten school centers are selected to constitute the circuit or field of activities in the county. Each of these centers is visited by the outfit once every two weeks. The director arrives at the school before the children are dismissed (when school is in session) and conducts games, athletics,

story-telling, and other recreational and educational activities. Clubs for women, boys and girls are organized, and any possible service for the advancement of the community is rendered by the director and mechanic. Often, between school sessions (in the summer time), recreational and educational activities are promoted in the afternoon for children and adults.

In the evening a moving picture entertainment, usually consisting of six reels, is given to the general community meeting. At this meeting the county agents, such as the Superintendent of Schools, Superintendent of Public Welfare, Health Officer, Home Demonstrator, Farm Demonstrator or other invited speakers help the community with community betterment organization, recreational activities or educational features. As a result the school in many localities is rapidly becoming the center of social and community life.

In considering the success of this new movement in North Carolina, Mr. Howell further states:

The first county circuit was organized in 1917 in Sampson County. Six counties were organized the first year in spite of war conditions. Now there are seventeen counties operating regularly, and many have made application. For lack of funds these latter counties cannot now be given the service.

In some of the most aggressive communities in various parts of the country we find many of the things which are given by state and county help in North Carolina being taken over by the consolidated school systems. In McHenry

County, Illinois, a decided drift in such direction is shown. Here we find ten community schools: one a consolidated school composed of nine small one-room school districts, and nine community high schools. The latter have districts ranging from 36 to 48 square miles in size. The county superintendent states that these school districts divide the county into natural communities. Relative to the work of the schools in community activities, he writes under date of April 30, 1920, as follows:

> I believe that the community high school will ultimately absorb the county Y.M.C.A., athletic work, etc., that is now attempted by one man in the county, that is, rural or semi-rural work. In like manner it may absorb even the better farming movement through the community high school agricultural teacher; the county domestic science movement also.

The consolidated school organization, therefore, furnishes the machinery or framework upon which to erect the first rural organization plans. It may, in fact, be thought of as a type of local government for the farmer based upon his community. It is limited, perhaps, in its scope, but nevertheless it is a government with specific aims and duties. As far as its powers go in school and educational affairs, it is a highly effective form.

As community development takes place, leading to the need of more powers in the hands of the local community, the limitations of the consolidated school organization as a governmental agency may be enlarged by legislative enactment, as far as such changes do not encroach upon the constitutional authority already granted to previously existing units such as civil townships and magisterial districts. In these latter cases, we find, tightly knotted into many of our state constitutions, certain governmental powers which are hard to break out and redistribute, even though it has been plainly proved that such units are misfits and ill adapted to the social groupings of the people.

Given the consolidated school district and an expansion of its functions up to the limits allowed by constitutional provisions to other conflicting units, the farmer, it will be found, will have a most useful legalized community. The articulation of district with district throughout the county and state will furnish the avenues necessary to connect the farmer with wide governmental, social, and educational contact with the nation at large. A more comprehensive system of rural local government must await the more advanced development of

public opinion relative to the need of same, and systematic studies in political science bearing directly upon the problem.

This discussion of the growing and enlarging influence and powers of the consolidated school organization is not to be understood as meaning that the school organization as such is to absorb or even dwarf such institutions as the church, grange, or lodge, but quite the contrary. It simply means that through the school organization as a piece of local machinery owned and controlled by one and all in the community, we have a permanent, universal force, which is to be utilized in helping co-ordinate the work and aims of the other institutions of less universality. It is the one institution which may take the leading rôle in shaping plans and policies to fit the community and to co-ordinate it with the county, state, and nation. Upon the basis of the consolidated school district as a unit of organization, which can well cover every part of the farm population, the farmer may easily find himself and identify his relationships to every other group in the state and country at large. The farmer's changing psychology, his enlarged outlook, and his new local unit will all have a logical consistency one with another.

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APPENDIX A

(Public Laws 1919)

AN ACT TO REPEAL CHAPTER 128 OF THE PUBLIC LAWS OF 1917, AND TO PROVIDE FOR THE INCORPORATION OF RURAL COMMUNITIES

The General Assembly of North Carolina do enact:

SECTION 1. That the people of any rural community in North Carolina, upon petition signed by a majority of the registered voters of such community, embracing in area one entire school district, may be incorporated under the provisions of this act, the title of such corporate body being "The..... Community of.....County" (or counties), the name of community and county (or counties) to be supplied in the petition for incorporation: *Provided*, that no part of such community shall be nearer than two miles to the nearest boundary of any incorporated town or city of five thousand or more inhabitants, and nothing in this chapter shall be construed to prevent the extension of the limits of any town or city regularly incorporated so as to include territory incorporated under this act. After any school district has been incorporated under the provisions of this act, the boundaries of said school district and incorporated rural community may be changed only in the manner prescribed in section four thousand one hundred and fifteen, Revisal of one thousand nine hundred and five, for changing the lines of a special-tax school district, except that the county board of education shall proceed to enlarge such boundaries in accordance with said section upon the written

request of a majority of the school committeemen or trustees of said school district and a written request of a majority of the board of directors of the incorporated rural community.

SEC. 2. The petition for incorporation shall be addressed to the Secretary of State at his office in Raleigh, who, if such petition is in due form, shall then issue the certificate of incorporation without charge therefor.

SEC. 3. The registered voters of each community incorporated under the provisions of this act shall hold a public community meeting on the first Saturday in January of each year, or on such other day as may be specified in the petition for incorporation. The place of such meeting shall also be designated in the petition for incorporation, but the time or place, or both, may be changed at any annual meeting to take effect at the following annual meeting, notice of such change to be posted in three public places in such community. At such annual community meeting the voters may adjourn to meet at some other specified date, and other meetings may be held upon petition signed by ten per cent of the registered voters of the community, provided notice of such meeting is posted at three public places in such community at least two weeks prior to such meeting. Questions involving the levy of any tax, however, shall be decided only at the regular annual community meeting.

SEC. 4. At each annual community meeting, as provided in section three of this act, the voters shall elect three persons to be known as the "Board of Directors of.....Community," one of whom shall be designated as chairman and another as secretary-treasurer, each performing the duties suggested by his title.

SEC. 5. The said board of directors of such community shall be charged with the duty of enforcing and executing

such ordinances as the community meetings may adopt, and performing such other functions not inconsistent with the laws of North Carolina or the United States as the community meetings may direct. The annual compensation, if any, of such board of directors, or any member thereof, shall be fixed at each annual meeting.

SEC. 6. At each meeting of the registered voters of a community they shall have the right to adopt, amend, or repeal ordinances, provided such action is not inconsistent with the laws of North Carolina or the United States, concerning the following subjects: the public roads of the community; the public schools of the community; regulations intended to promote the public health; the police protection; the abatement of nuisances; the care of paupers, aged or infirm persons; to encourage the coming of new settlers; the regulation of vagrancy; aids to the enforcement of State and National laws; the collection of community taxes; the establishment and support of public libraries, parks, halls, playgrounds, fairs, and other agencies of recreation, education, health, music, art, and morals: *Provided*, that nothing herein contained shall be construed to mean that any community incorporated under the provisions of this act shall lose its identity as a part of the road and school systems of the county or counties in which it is located, nor lose its right to participate the same as before incorporation in the benefits to be derived from county or township funds raised by taxation or otherwise for building or maintaining the public roads, for the public schools, for public health, or for other public uses.

SEC. 7. That for the promotion of any of the objects mentioned in section six of this act the registered voters of any incorporated community, in annual community meeting assembled, shall have the right to levy taxes or issue bonds upon the property of the community, within

limits hereinafter set forth, either for specific purposes or for the general use of the community upon a method of tax division among varying objects as agreed upon by such annual community meeting: *Provided*, that the aggregate of taxes levied for such community purposes shall not exceed five mills annually on each dollar of taxable property: *Provided*, that the aggregate amount of the bonds issued shall at no time exceed ten per cent of the total property valuation of the community: *Provided*, that any tax imposed or levied under the provisions of this act may be revoked only in the manner prescribed in section four thousand one hundred and fifteen, Revisal of one thousand nine hundred and five, for revoking special taxes in a special-tax school district.

Sec. 8. No community meeting may levy a tax unless a majority of the registered voters of the community are present at such meeting and vote by ballot for such tax; but at any annual community meeting a majority of the voters present, whatever their number, may vote to submit the question of levying such a tax to the qualified voters of the community at an election to be held not earlier than thirty days subsequent to such meeting. If the community meeting shall desire to submit separately the question of tax levy for different purposes, it shall mention a name of not more than six words by which each such tax shall be designated, as for example, "Road Tax," "Public Library Tax"; or such community meeting may submit the question of a tax levy for various purposes under the title "For Community Tax." At the election herein provided for, each voter may deposit a ballot marked "For..... Tax" or "Against .....Tax"; and if a majority of the qualified voters of the community at such election, shall vote for such tax, then the proposed tax levy shall be enforced and the tax collected at the same time and in

the same manner as State and county taxes are now collected, or such incorporated community, through its board of directors, may name a collector of community taxes and fix his compensation, requiring both tax collector and treasurer to give bond for proper amounts.

SEC. 9. At any election herein provided for, the board of directors may act as election officers, judges of election, etc., and the ballots shall be counted, compared, canvassed and returned in the same manner as is now provided for general elections in the various counties of the State. The result of any such election shall be certified by the secretary of the board of directors of the community to the clerk of the board of county commissioners who shall record the same in the minutes of the said board of county commissioners, and no further recording or declaring of the result shall be necessary.

SEC. 10. The Bureau of Community Service now directed by the State Departments of Education, Agriculture, and Health, the State College of Agriculture and Engineering, and the State Normal and Industrial College is hereby charged with the duty of securing from the communities of the State incorporated under this act reports as to what each community is doing for the promotion of the purposes mentioned in section six of this act, and the aforesaid Bureau of Community Service shall furnish the officers of such incorporated communities forms for keeping records, accounts, etc., and for making reports. Said bureau shall also provide forms and instructions to citizens of the State desiring to petition for incorporation under the provisions of this act, and shall publish annually a summary of the work accomplished by incorporated communities. The members of the board of directors of such incorporated communities are required to render such reports to the Bureau of Community Service, and to post

copies of same, together with an itemized statement of receipts, disbursements, and balances for the year, in three public places in the community, under the penalty, upon conviction of a fine of ten dollars each: *Provided*, that all printing required under this act shall be paid for by the State Department of Education.

SEC. 11. Said board of directors may adopt standards for the production and marketing of produce, canned vegetables, etc., and may adopt labels, trade names, and brands for the same, and regulate their use, requiring the inhabitants of said community to comply with the standards set and adopted by the directors before they can use the brand, trade name, or labels for said community; and said board of directors may adopt such regulations as may be necessary to protect said brands, trade names, etc., may have an inspection of the goods sold thereunder, and may take any and all necessary steps looking to a system of community standard production, and of co-operative community marketing.

SEC. 12. Any person violating any ordinances adopted under the provisions of this act or any rule made by the board of directors or other governing authority authorized by any of the provisions of this act, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and upon conviction shall be imprisoned not exceeding thirty days or fined not exceeding fifty dollars, or both, at the discretion of the court. Any magistrate residing within the boundaries of a community incorporated under this act shall have the power to hear and try all cases arising from violation of ordinances adopted by such community: *Provided*, that if there is no magistrate residing within the boundaries of the community, or if the community shall desire an additional magistrate, there shall be nominated at each annual meeting some suitable person living within the confines of the community who shall,

upon proper certification of nomination, be appointed community magistrate by the Governor of the State, with all the powers of a magistrate within the bounds of said community.

SEC. 13. The board of directors of any community organized under the provisions of this act are authorized and empowered to employ one or more policemen for the community, whose duties and powers shall be those prescribed by law for constables for the townships in the various counties of the State; and the said policemen shall receive as compensation the same fees that are now prescribed by law for constables.

SEC. 14. That each person charged with the duty of registering voters in an election precinct embraced in whole or in part in any incorporated community shall furnish the chairman of the board of directors of such incorporated community a complete list of the registered voters in his precinct at the preceding State election, and from such list the board of directors shall compile an official list of registered voters residing in the community for use in connection with the enforcement of this act, such registrar receiving one-half cent for each name so furnished, to be paid for by the community.

SEC. 15. That all laws and clauses of laws in conflict with the provisions of this act, and especially chapter one hundred and twenty-eight of the Public Laws of one thousand nine hundred and seventeen, are hereby repealed.

SEC. 16. That this act shall be in force from and after its ratification.

Ratified this 10th day of March, A.D. 1919.

EXPLANATION

Under this act rural communities may be incorporated and chartered in the same general way as cities and towns

are incorporated and chartered. Though this has not heretofore been allowed in our State, there is no good reason why fifty families scattered over a rural school district are not just as important as so many families huddled together in a town—and just as deserving of the privilege of local self-government.

Because the law has not been tried in North Carolina and in the consequent absence of recorded ruling of courts relative to it, there seemed to be a chance for doubts to arise as to the exact legal effect such incorporation would have upon a community. With a view to setting clearly before the people the intentions and actual effects of the measure, Governor Bickett recently asked the Attorney-General, the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, and others to confer with him. After thorough discussion of the act in this conference a committee was appointed to prepare this statement of

PURPOSES AND EFFECTS

The committee finds that the incorporation of a community under this act

1. Will not change the standing of the community in relation to the county school and road systems, or otherwise, nor destroy any advantage the community had before incorporation.

2. It simply gives to rural communities the same machinery of progress that is given to towns and cities by incorporation, only more modern and extensive, affording practical means for giving effect to the finest aspirations of the people.

3. It will enable country people to act quickly in matters of vital importance to community progress which might otherwise be injuriously delayed for months and years.

4. It will enable the majority of a community, when in a progressive mind, to compel the co-operation of an indifferent minority and the observance of ordinances approved by the majority.

5. It will give a name, a form, and definite boundaries to the rural community and will steadily develop among the inhabitants a feeling of local patriotism, pride, and ambition that it is impossible to develop otherwise.

6. It will make the school and the schoolhouse the center and rallying point for all activities, agencies, and plans for the improvement of community life and the advancement of community progress and prosperity.

7. It is applied democracy, and in accordance with the traditions and genius of our race. Our earliest Saxon forefathers had their "folk moot," and the "town meeting" of colonial days was but an expression of the same feelings. Thomas Jefferson declared that, next to public education, America's greatest need was provision for giving every rural community just such facilities for local self-government.

8. In short, it *makes progress legal and binding* when favored by a majority of the community instead of its being probably only an ineffectual, effervescent mass-sentiment.

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